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THE
UNIVERSAL RESTORATION

EXHIBITED IN A SERIES OF

DIALOGUES

BETWEEN

A MINISTER AND HIS FRIEND.

COMPREHENDING

The Subſtance of ſeveral Converſations that the Author had with various Perſons, both in AMERICA and EUROPE, on that intereſting Subject;

WHEREIN THE MOST

FORMIDABLE OBJECTIONS

Are ſtated and fully anſwered.

BY ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

THE FOURTH EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED,
WITH NOTES CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY,
BY W. VIDLER.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY W. BURTON, NORTH STREET, CITY ROAD,
And ſold by TEULON, No. 100, Houndſditch; PARSONS, No. 21, Paternoſter-Row; SCARLETT, No. 348, Strand;
And may be had of the Bookſellers in general.

1799.

FROM

THE CRITICAL REVIEW

For September 1788.

'OUR Author, with great candour and extenſive knowledge of 'the ſubject, diſcuſſes the doctrine of Eternal Puniſhments. He 'thinks that there will be a period when every ſinner will be re-'ſtored to the Divine favour. This doctrine is perfectly conſiſtent 'with the benevolence of the Deity. It is ſupported by many 'wiſe and good men; nor is there any reaſon to ſuppoſe it will be 'perverted to ſerve the purpoſes of vice and immorality. Mr. 'Winchester, in his defence of it, ſhews much charity, much hu-'manity, and no little ſhare of learning. The Fifth Dialogue 'alone, which relates to the deſign and tendency of puniſhment, 'might furniſh ſome little foundation for a difference of opinion; 'but in a queſtion ſo greatly above human attainment, the mind 'would be loſt in the enquiry, and not greatly benefited by the 'diſcuſſion. The queſtion of the Univerſal Reſtoration muſt be 'examined, as Mr. Winchester has done, by the word of God, as 'revealed at different times, and particularly in the goſpel.'

N. B. A conſiderable part of the Fifth Dialogue, being printed in the Lectures on the Prophecies, is left out of this edition, and the remaining part is included in the Fourth Dialogue.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

THE gospel of the grace of God is in itself so amiable, and has something in it so attracting and engaging, that, wherever it has come, it has gained proselites, and commended itself to the hearts and consciences of many. It bringeth salvation to all men; but few, in comparison, have seen this, so as cordially to fall in with and confess it, when by *all* men is to be understood every individual of the human race. Some indeed, in every period of the Christian church, have seen and acknowledged this; but, by one means or other, this excellency of the gospel has been hid from the eyes of the generality both of its preachers and hearers. It has been too good news for some---and too bad for others; and the objections they have raised against the *universality of its grace*, and the *fullest extent of its efficacy and mercy*, have been many and great. The most formidable and important of them, I have endeavoured to obviate in the following Dialogues, which, in the fear of God, and with a view to his glory, I now commit to the public eye, aiming to commend myself to every man's conscience, in the sight of God. They are the result of real conversations with various characters, and persons of different casts and complexions, both in my native country and in this; and, I trust, have already had their use. Sensible I am writing for a wise, a good, and an all-powerful Master, (whose smiles are heaven, and whose frowns are hell) I am easy in leaving all with him.

The reader will eaſily perceive I have all along ſtated the doctrine of the Univerſal Reſtoration in ſuch a way as to imply and require a change of heart, and thorough alteration of mind and ſpirit, from what we are by nature, and as we come into the world. He will ſee, that without a ſecond and ſpiritual birth, he can have no happy place in the kingdom of Chriſt or of God. All muſt be *ſubject* there---none *rebellious*. It is to be lamented, ſome have ſo blended this noble and univerſal view of the goſpel-grace, with their own mixtures and miſconceptions of it, as to have caſt an odium upon it, at firſt view, and have occaſioned many to ſtumble at the very threſhold of their enquiries. How it ſhould ever enter into the minds of any, that the goſpel was a libertine, *lawleſs* ſcheme, is hard to conceive; or why they ſhould even wiſh and deſire it, is as unaccountable, if they rightly underſtood the nature of the ſalvation it brings. Theſe, then, have fundamentally miſtaken it, and made it another thing: but, muſt the true, the real, and full goſpel be hid and concealed from mankind, becauſe men of corrupt minds will and do *abuſe* it? Upon the ſame principle, then, the whole Bible muſt be concealed; ſince all its diſtinguiſhing truths and doctrines are liable to this, and, by ſome or other, have unceaſingly been abuſed. He, ſure, muſt have a deceived heart, that hath turned him aſide, who is not as willing to be *ruled* as he is to be *ſaved* by Chriſt: indeed, it is a main part of his ſalvation, if he did but know it. Sin is a diſeaſe, and muſt be *eradicated* to make the patient happy. If ſin is not removed and deſtroyed, as well as pardoned and forgiven, the ſinner is but half ſaved. CHRIST THE SAVIOUR, and *not* CHRIST THE KING! Where has he ſuch a revealed character as this? And yet, from the talk and writings of ſome men, and from the licentious ſpirit of the times, one is almoſt tempted to ſuſpect whether

ther ſuch perſons think any higher of Chriſt, in his *regal* office than the Jews of his own day did; who, notwithſtanding their bowing the knee, and hailing him as their king, at the ſame time crowned him with thorns, ſmote him on the head with a reed, diſrobed him, and in other reſpects, treated him with ſuch contempt and abuſe, as clearly ſhewed it was all ſham and grimace in them; mere titular and mock royalty:---they called him *king*, without intending him the leaſt ſubjection.

The preſent work ſtands clear of all this; and the doctrine it defends is made evidently appear to be a *doctrine according to godlineſs*; and to have no ſuch looſe and dangerous tendency; but, on the contrary, ſo to dilate and ennoble the hearts and minds of thoſe who receive it as to promote and bring forward every holy, happy temper and practice, beyond any other view of the goſpel whatever. In the *third Dialogue* I have particularly laboured this.

Did I, like ſome, maintain that there was no future puniſhment at all, it might, indeed, create an alarm; but when I throughout the whole inſiſt upon perſonal holineſs, and obedience to the law and goſpel of Chriſt, from faith and love which is in him; and have proved, that a ſtrain and force muſt be put upon the doctrine itſelf, if it be otherwiſe: the charge is frivolous and groundleſs, and the fear childiſh, to ſay no worſe of it. *Future* and *proportionate* puniſhments there will be; 'every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience (unleſs men 'now repent and believe) ſhall hereafter receive a juſt 'recompenſe of reward.' The current doctrine of *endleſs miſery* deſtroys this rule of equity and proportion; for though it contends for *degrees* of future puniſhment, yet it makes the *duration* the ſame, whether men ſin more or leſs; and this has wrought unhappily upon ſome, who have, in conſequence, ſinned,

as it were, with a cart-rope, and gone to the full length and ſtretch of iniquity. There is ſomething in the idea of *equity* and *juſtice* that commends itſelf even to the hearts of the wicked and diſobedient: with them *punitive* juſtice is approved, and has its happy effects; while a ſuppoſed VINDICTIVE SPIRIT in the Deity has only tended to petrify and harden them. In the ſcriptural character of JEHOVAH, *Love* is the firſt and leading attribute of his nature, and *Mercy* the laſt perfection he exerciſes; whereas, in man's deſcription of him, as dealing with his rebellious creatures, ſtern *Juſtice* brings up the rear, and rejoices over Love and Mercy! The doctrine of *endleſs miſery* is liable to this objection, how many ſoever may ſeem to lie againſt its being *reſtrictive* only.

But why publiſh at all ſuch a doctrine as this? The queſtion comes too late, as it is already known, and made public by authors of various names, in a more formal and explanatory way. Mine is properly a *defence* of it, through the ſuppoſed difficulties attending it---a *Supplement* to what others have but ſlightly and ſuperficially touched upon. And this I have publiſhed with various views.——

1. That the doctrine itſelf might not ſuffer, and be thought ill of, from the falſe and ſpurious mediums through which it has appeared, and for want of a more full and proper vindication of it.

2. To remove, as far as may be, thoſe bars and obſtructions that have, in ſome meaſure, blocked up the way, and ſhut up the minds of many, from ſo full and fair an equiry into the goſpel as it deſerves, and as they might otherwiſe have given it.

3. To correct the acidity of *Reprobarian Leaven*, and to prevent (if poſſible) thoſe deſpondencies and dejections of mind, which too frequently ariſe from a ſtrong and ſecret ſuſpicion, that Chriſt died only for the

ſins

ſins of a certain few, excluding all the reſt of mankind from any ſaving benefit by his death.

4. To harmonize Scripture, and make it more conſiſtent with itſelf than it ſeems to have been yet made: alſo, to conciliate and coaleſce contending parties; bringing them hereby nearer to one another in love and affection; and ſo to that unity, peace, and concord, ſo devoutly to be wiſhed.

5. To undeceive and do juſtice to the Engliſh reader, who, when he takes up the inſpired volume, is uſed to affix no other idea to the words *eternal*, *everlaſting*, *for ever*, *for ever* AND *ever*, than a ſtrictly *endleſs duration*, when either happineſs or miſery are annexed to them.

6. To eſtabliſh and confirm the faith of ſome, who have ſeen reaſon to believe this doctrine, and were ſimply coming into it; but finding few, as yet, in the full belief of it, and hearing the continual outcries of its adverſaries, without being able, at firſt view, to anſwer them, they have got weak and wavering about it, and inclined to neglect it, for want of more and ſufficient evidence, as they ſuppoſe.

UNIVERSAL SALVATION, ſeen through theſe difficulties, is an antidote to all theſe evils; and it is eaſy to ſee, that if this be admitted as a Scripture-truth, they muſt at once fall to the ground. I would not knowingly deceive, nor be deceived, in a matter of ſuch vaſt importance; nor yet could I wiſh mankind to be ignorant of it. I have, therefore, at the *expence of character and popularity with the religious world*-- at the *hazard of temporal intereſt and emolument*, and *refuſing no other ſacrifice*, in what I apprehend to be the cauſe of God and Truth---come forth as a writing witneſs on this ſubject, and a defender of the faith which once I deſtroyed. It was with caution and reluctance I came into this view myſelf, ſo that I can bear with others.

If

If conviction operate on them as on me, we will agree to say, The evidence and force of truth *constraineth* us.

While I saw the provision and salvation of the gospel to be only *partial*, I so declared and delivered it; but now it appears *universal* must I be silent? 'He 'that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully,' saith JEHOVAH by his prophet. Jer. xxiii. 28. 'What 'is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.'

Partial redemption and salvation, under my present views, are *the darkness and eclipse* of the church of Christ; *Universal Restoration* (of all lapsed Intelligences, for no other I meddle with in this defence) *the Sun of Righteousness*, shining in his full strength, and in all his ability to save.

I have left no room for any to think, that the sufferings sinners go through for their sins, *expiate* or *make atonement* for them, as the sufferings of Christ do; neither have I supposed they are altogether useless, or the *endless* consequence of their sad choice, and the wretched life they have led in this world, and incapable of being sanctified and over-ruled to their good. I have spoken, I apprehend, as the oracles of God have spoken on this head; and appeal to you as wise men, judge ye what I say. Because a degenerate Church has made a wrong and corrupt use of this matter, is there not a right and proper use thereof? Considering how she has corrupted most of the other truths and doctrines of the gospel, it is rather a presumptive argument that *this* is a truth of it, though strangely abused and perverted by her. Should I be mistaken in this particular, *Restoration itself* may be true. The blind, but spiritually-discerning poet could see this---

——'Man shall find grace,
'And shall not grace find means?'
Paradise Lost, b. iii. l. 227.

If

If any think otherwiſe, and are diſpoſed, in the ſpirit of Moſes and of Chriſt, of meekneſs and love, to canvaſs the ſubject further, I have no objection to give them a fuller reaſon of the hope that is in me, concerning this. In the mean time, I am happy in finding ſome who have, in all ages, witneſſed this good confeſſion; the preſent is not without them. And ſuch is my faith and hope, that when the age of ages ſhall take place, full and ocular demonſtration will then be given, that *none* were *left without remedy*; nor any one of the now fallen intelligent creatures of God, but what ſhall then be raiſed up again;---not to ſink into *non-exiſtence*, or the *gloomy vale of annihilation*; much leſs to be *endleſsly miſerable*---but to ſhine in all the borrowed light and glory of their tranſcendent Head and Reſtorer, JESUS CHRIST: and in one united chorus of praiſe and thankſgiving, to ſing Hallelujah to God and the Lamb, without ceaſing, and without end!

Blackman Street, Southwark,
JUNE 4, 1788.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

TWO large Editions of this book have already been ſold; and ſince the preſent has been in the preſs, there has appeared another edition, executed, indeed, in an inferior ſtyle, but calculated to make the Univerſal Doctrine ſtill farther known. No anſwer has yet appeared in defence of the tremendous doctrine of Endleſs Miſery. The abettors of that cruel ſentiment have contented themſelves with vociferating threatenings of never-ending damnation upon the Univerſaliſts, as Mr. Huntingdon and Mr. Thompſon; or with *aſſerting and reaſſerting the doctrine of endleſs puniſhment*, as Mr. Dan Taylor---to whom Mr. Wincheſter gave a very able anſwer in his *Reſtitution of all Things defended*. To the former gentlemen we have returned no anſwer, as their paucity of argument and virulence of language make them unworthy of notice.

This edition is printed on a type much ſmaller than the two firſt. The *means* and *manner* of Mr. Wincheſter's embracing the Univerſal Doctrine, which were prefixed to the ſecond edition, are here omitted, as I have lately publiſhed a Sketch of his Life, in which that is included; but the Preface to the Firſt Edition is retained, becauſe it is a good introduction to the work itſelf, and becauſe it contains good and weighty reaſons why the full doctrine of divine love ought to be publicly made known.

This edition alſo is accompanied with a conſiderable number of notes, chiefly of a critical nature, and tending

tending to corroborate the doctrine which Mr. Winchester has delivered.

If I had known of any new objections to the Universal Doctrine which are not noticed in this work, I would have brought them forward, and either attempted to answer them, or have confessed my inability so to do; but as none have, to my knowledge, appeared, I may reasonably conclude, that the subject, on that side of the question, is exhausted: for if the advocates of Endless Damnation had any thing more to offer in favour of their sentiment, I have no reason to believe they want zeal to bring it forward; much less have I reason to think that their present silence proceeds from a consciousness of the stability of their views; for many, very many, serious Christians, otherwise of different sentiments, begin to doubt of the truth of the current opinion concerning future punishment; and the real character of the Deity begins to force its way upon the minds of men: and this state of things is no secret; the leading men, both among Calvinists and Arminians, know this fact, and are doing every thing which interest, connexion, favour, or frowns can do, to prevent the threatening evil. But yet I would shew to them a more excellent way---namely, to prove from Scripture, that the following work is not founded in truth: that would be the only effectual method to stop the progress of the Universal Doctrine. There is no doubt but the gentlemen alluded to have ability sufficient for the work which I assign them; nothing, therefore, but the want of evidence on their side, can, in my opinion, account for their silence; and I am apt to think, that most men will judge with me.

As for the loud outcry, that the Universal Doctrine would lead men to immorality---it has greatly ceased with

with thoſe who have had the beſt opportunities of obſerving the effects which it has had upon the lives of the generality of its profeſſors. No doubt but this, like all the other doctrines of grace, is capable of abuſe; but that the idea of *limited* puniſhment---in *exact proportion* to deeds done---on the ground of *mediation*---- ſhould lead to immorality, is hard to prove, even in theory, and the fact is contradicted by experience.

The public have decidedly given their judgment of the doctrine contained in theſe Dialogues, by their continual call for them. I dare ſay ſomebody will gravely tell me, that the judgment of the *public* is of no value, while the judgment of the *church* is againſt it. An anſwer to this would lead us to enquire, who is the church of God? and is the judgment of the church infallible? But I avoid entering into ſo wide a field, and only obſerve, that by the *public* I do not mean ſuch men as walk according to the courſe of this world ---they care for none of theſe things; nor yet the fierce and fiery bigots of the different parties of Chriſtians; but chiefly ſuch men as are poſſeſſed of the ſpirit of the goſpel, and who have long attended to the contentions of Chriſtians, but, ſick of inconſiſtency and ſtrife, have ſilently withdrawn themſelves from contention, and have been waiting in ſecret for ſome further diſcovery of the deſigns of God to men, in Chriſt Jeſus, in order to harmonize the word of truth. A great many ſuch there are among different denominations of Chriſtians; and not a few, alſo, who do not rank with any denomination. By far the greater part of thoſe who have embraced the Univerſal doctrine are perſons of this character---and among ſuch it is ſtill making a rapid progreſs.

The

The ſentiment of *endleſs miſery* is loſing ground very faſt; not that every one who gives up this commences Univerſaliſt. Betwixt theſe the ſentiment of *Annihilation*---now called *Deſtruction*---comes in: I look with pleaſure upon its progreſs, becauſe I conſider it, in relation to the other two, juſt as I do the Lutheran notion of conſubſtantiation, in relation to tranſubſtantiation and a ſimple remembrance of the death of Chriſt, in the Lord's ſupper. And I account for many good men embracing the doctrine of *endleſs* deſtruction, juſt as I do for many good men embracing conſubſtantiation, when they had diſcovered the error of tranſubſtantiation---becauſe the full light of truth is more than their viſual powers can at preſent ſupport *. But tranſubſtantiation, among proteſtants, has long been caſt to the bats and the moles, and conſubſtantiation is haſtening after it---a ſimilar fate, I apprehend, awaits the ſentiments of *endleſs* miſery and *endleſs* deſtruction.

W. VIDLER.

LONDON,
March 31, 1799.

* See note on this ſubject p. 176.

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FAMILIAR DIALOGUES

BETWEEN

A MINISTER AND HIS FRIEND,

CONCERNING

THE DOCTRINE OF THE

RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS.

DIALOGUE I.

Friend. I HAVE taken the freedom to call upon you, to have a little discourse with you concerning the doctrine of *the Restoration of all Things*, which it is said you believe; and to propose some objections.

Minister. I am happy to see you, and am willing to discourse upon any subject that may be agreeable; but I have always made it a rule never to press the belief of my sentiments upon my friends; and I can safely say, that, though such great pains have been taken by my adversaries to prejudice people against me, I have never gone about from house to house to propagate my opinions; and I make it an universal rule not to introduce the subject in conversation, unless desired; but yet I never have refused to own my sentiments, when asked, respecting the matter; and am ready, in the fear of God, to answer any objections that can be

made, to a doctrine which I believe is plainly revealed in the Scriptures of truth, and appears to me worthy of God.

Friend. I shall first of all bring to view that grand objection, which is formed from the word *eternal* or *everlasting* being applied to a future state of punishment; as in the following passages: Isaiah, xxxiii. 14. 'The 'sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised 'the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the 'devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with *ever-* '*lasting** burnings?'

Dan. xii. 2. 'And many of them that sleep in the 'dust of the earth shall awake, some to *everlasting* life, 'and some to shame and *everlasting* contempt.'

St. Matt. xviii. 8. 'Wherefore, if thine hand or thy 'foot offend thee (or cause thee to offend) cut them 'off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee 'to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having 'two hands, or two feet, to be cast into *everlasting* 'fire.'

St. Matt. xxv. 41. 'Then shall he say also unto 'them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, 'into *everlasting* fire, prepared for the devil and his 'angels.' Verse 46. 'These shall go away into *ever-* '*lasting* punishment; but the righteous into life *eternal*, 'or *everlasting*,'---the same word in the original being used for both, though varied by the translators.

* 'The sinners in Zion are struck with dread;
'Terror hath seized the hypocrites:
'Who among us can abide this consuming fire?
'Who among us can abide these continued burnings?'
LOWTH.

The Bishop supposes this text to be the language of the wicked Jews, while under fearful apprehensions of the desolation of their country by Senacherib. If this be the sense---and the context strongly pleads for it---then the words have no reference to *future* punishment, and we have one passage less, in our translation, in which the word everlasting is connected with future misery. The Hebrew word which is here rendered *everlasting* is עולם *gnolam*, and strictly implies *hidden*; and, when connected with time, it means a *hidden* (but not an *eternal*) *duration*.

St. Mark,

St. Mark, iii. 29. 'But he that ſhall blaſpheme 'againſt the Holy Ghoſt, hath never forgiveneſs; but 'is in danger of *eternal* damnation.'

2 Theſ. i. 7, 8, 9. 'The Lord Jeſus ſhall be re-'vealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flam-'ing fire, taking vengeance on them that know not 'God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus 'Chriſt: who ſhall be puniſhed with *everlaſting* de-'ſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord, and from 'the glory of his power.'

Jude, 6, 7. 'And the angels which kept not their 'firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation, he hath re-'ſerved in *everlaſting** chains under darkneſs, unto the 'judgment of the great day: even as Sodom and

* The Greek word αἰδίῳ, *aidios*, occurs in the ſacred canon only in Jude, 6. and Rom. i. 20.—It is alſo found in Wiſdom, vii. 26. The lexicographers give the ſenſe *everlaſting*, *eternal*; but that this cannot be the ſenſe in Jude ſeems clear, becauſe theſe chains, however long the fallen angels may be held in them, will continue *only till* the judgment takes place. The word is alſo uſed in a limited ſenſe by other Greek writers; thus Thucydides, ὅθεν αἰδίον μισθοφορὰν ὑπαρξειν, *othen aidion miſthophoran uparxein*, 'from 'whence he expected a perpetual ſalary.' This only means a ſalary *during his life*. Thucydides, therefore, uſes the word to expreſs an *unknown* (though certainly a limited) period. I conceive αἰδίῳ, *aidios*, to have the ſame etymology as ἀδης, *hades*—from α, negative, and ἰδειν *idein*, *to ſee*; and that therefore it ſignifies *unſeen* or *unknown*: Rom. i. 20. where it is applied to the power of the Deity, it means *unknown* power, becauſe we ſee or know only a very ſmall part of God's power. In Jude it muſt be *unknown* chains, becauſe we do not know the *duration* of that reſtraint under which fallen angels are, and will be held, before the awful judgment of the great day will commence. In the Wiſdom of Solomon, vii. 26. wiſdom is ſpoken of as the brightneſs of the *unknown* light; or, as Paul ſays, 'the light which no man can approach unto.' 1 Tim. vi. 16.

Some modern preachers and writers are ſo fond of eternal puniſhments for the wicked, that they have brought forward this word as containing certain proof of the point. It is to be hoped that in future they will be able to diſtinguiſh between *unknown* chains and *everlaſting* chains. The former is the ſcriptural expreſſion, but the latter is not found in the ſacred pages of the original text. The Syriac Teſtament reads, both in Romans and Jude, עלמא *gnolam*, *unknown*.

'Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner, 'giving themſelves over unto fornication, and going 'after ſtrange fleſh, are ſet forth for an example, ſuf-'fering the vengeance of *eternal* fire.'

Theſe texts, all together, form ſuch an objection to the doctrine of the Reſtoration, that I can by no means believe it, unleſs this can be fairly anſwered, and proofs brought from the Scriptures to ſhew, that the words *everlaſting* and *eternal*, being connected with the future puniſhment of the wicked, do not neceſſarily imply endleſs duration.

Minister. I am glad that you have ſo fully ſtated the matter; and I highly commend your reſolution not to believe the *univerſal doctrine*, unleſs this can be as fully anſwered, without perverting the Scriptures; and if I am not able, with God's aſſiſtance, to remove this difficulty, I will publicly recant my ſentiments.

But, before I come to give a direct anſwer, I would beg leave to remark how very ſeldom this word is uſed to expreſs the duration of puniſhment. We ſhould think, by ſome ſermons we hear, that *everlaſting* is applied to miſery in every book of the New Teſtament, if not in every chapter. A friend of mine told me, that he was once preaching in Maryland, and after ſermon a man came and aſked him, of what denomination he was. To which he anſwered, 'A Baptiſt.' ---'I think,' ſays the man, 'that you do not preach 'up ſo much *everlaſting damnation* as the Baptiſts and 'Methodiſts among us do.' To which my friend replied---'*Everlaſting damnation* is a Scripture doctrine.' ---'True,' anſwered the man; 'but ſome preachers 'give us more of it in one ſermon than is to be found 'in the whole Bible.' The truth of this remark will appear, if we conſider that St. Luke never uſes the word αιωνιον, *aionion*, or *everlaſting*, as connected with the miſery of the wicked, in his goſpel; nor St. Mark but once, and then in a particular caſe only: in the goſpel of St. John it is not to be found at all, in that connection, nor in any of his epiſtles: in the account of the preaching of the apoſtles through the world, in the

the first age of Christianity, we do not find it mentioned in that light so much as once; no, not in all the sermons, and parts of sermons, which St. Luke has preserved in the book of the Acts; though the doctrine of *everlasting damnation* is the substance of many modern discourses. St. Paul never mentions *everlasting destruction* but once, though his writings form such a considerable part of the New Testament. Neither are such words found in the epistle of St. James, or in those of St. Peter; and but three times in the gospel of St. Matthew; and only twice in all the Old Testament. But was the word αιωνιον, *aionion*, applied to misery but once in the whole Bible, it would deserve a serious consideration; and unless the force of it can be removed by the authority of Scripture, it must remain an unanswerable objection. But I shall proceed to answer it by bringing an equal number of passages where the word *everlasting* is applied to *things* and *times* that have had, or must have, an end: as in the following passages: Gen. xvii. 7, 8. 'And I will establish 'my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after 'thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting* covenant, 'to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. 'And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, 'the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of 'Canaan, for an *everlasting* possession, and I will be 'their God.' Verse 13. 'He that is born in thy 'house, and bought with thy money, must needs be 'circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh 'for an *everlasting* covenant.'

Here note, that the land of Canaan is called an *everlasting* possession, and the covenant of circumcision in their flesh an *everlasting* covenant; though it is certain that the land of Canaan, as well as the other parts of the earth, must be dissolved or melted in the general conflagration; and *circumcision* is now declared null and void by the Holy Spirit; and the ceremony cannot endure to endless ages.

Of the same kind are the following passages: Gen. xlviii. 3, 4. 'And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Al-'mighty appeared to me at Luz, in the land of Canaan,

'and bleſſed me, and ſaid unto me, Behold, I will make 'thee fruitful and multiply thee, and I will make of 'thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to 'thy ſeed after thee, for an *everlaſting* poſſeſſion.' And in the bleſſing of Joſeph, he ſays, 'The bleſſings of 'thy father have prevailed above the bleſſings of my 'progenitors, unto the utmoſt bound of the *everlaſting* 'hills.' By which, I ſuppoſe, the hills of the land of Canaan were meant.

God ſaith to Moſes, Exod. xl. 15. 'And thou ſhalt 'anoint them (Aaron's ſons) as thou didſt anoint their 'father, that they may miniſter unto me in the prieſt's 'office: for their anointing ſhall ſurely be an *everlaſting* 'prieſthood, throughout their generations.' Lev. xvi. 34. 'And this ſhall be an *everlaſting* ſtatute unto you, 'to make an atonement for the children of Iſrael for 'all their ſins, once a year.'

The apoſtle declares, that theſe *everlaſting* ordinances were only *till the time of reformation*, Heb. ix. 10. And this *everlaſting* prieſthood of Aaron's ſons has ceaſed long ago: 'For the prieſthood being changed, (by 'Chriſt) there is of neceſſity, a change alſo of the law: 'for he of whom theſe things are ſpoken, pertaineth to 'another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the 'altar: for it is evident, that our Lord ſprang out of 'Judah; of which tribe Moſes ſpake nothing concern-'ing prieſthood. And it is yet far more evident; for 'that, after the ſimilitude of Melchiſedec, there ariſeth 'another prieſt, who is made not after the law of a 'carnal commandment, but after the power of an end-'leſs life: for he teſtifieth, Thou art a prieſt for ever, 'after the order of Melchiſedec: for there is verily a 'diſannulling of the commandment going before, for 'the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof.' Heb. vii. 12---18. The whole ſum of the apoſtle's argument, in this epiſtle, tends to prove, that the *everlaſting* ordinance is now no more; and the *everlaſting* prieſthood of Aaron and his ſons is now aboliſhed.

Another paſſage where the word *everlaſting* is evidently uſed in a limited ſenſe is Numb. xxv. 12, 13. 'Wherefore ſay, Behold, I give unto him my covenant

'of

'of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him, 'even the covenant of an *everlasting* priesthood.'

If the word *everlasting* intends *endless duration*, how should we be able to reconcile this promise with the total cessation of the Levitical priesthood? As for the family of Phineas, with whom this covenant of an *everlasting* priesthood was made, it was entirely deprived of the benefit of the same within the space of four hundred years: for when the sons of Eli transgressed the covenant, by profaning it, God sent him word, that, as they had broken it on their parts, it was entirely, and to all intents and purposes, dissolved. Read 1 Sam. ii. from the beginning of the 12th verse to the end of the 17th, and from the 27th verse to the end of the chapter: and also, chap. iii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

I will repeat verse 30 of the second chapter, in proof of my point. 'Wherefore JEHOVAH, God of 'Israel, saith, I said, indeed, that thy house, and the 'house of thy father, should walk before me *for ever*; 'but now JEHOVAH saith, Be it far from me; for them 'that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise 'me, shall be lightly esteemed.' Hophni and Phineas were soon after slain in one day; and Saul, the King of Israel, sent Doeg the Edomite, who fell upon the priests, and slew fourscore and five persons who wore a linen ephod, in one day. 'And Nob, the city of 'the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword; 'both men, and women, and children, and sucklings, 'and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the 'sword.' 1 Sam. xxii. 19. The whole house of Phineas seems to have been destroyed at this time, except Abiathar; and when Solomon came to the throne, he thrust him out from being priest, 'that he might fulfil 'the word of JEHOVAH, which he spake concerning 'the house of Eli, in Shiloh.' 1 Kings, ii. 27. From this time the house of Ithamar had the priesthood.

It is so evident that the word which is translated *everlasting*, cannot, in the nature of things, absolutely signify *without end*, that I should not think it worth while to quote any more passages in proof of its intending

tending *age* or *ages* only, were it not conſtantly uſed as a great objection againſt the Univerſal Reſtoration: I ſhall therefore inſtance two or three more in particular, in this place, and refer to a great number of others of the ſame kind, all tending to prove the ſame thing. Hab. iii. 6. 'The *everlaſting* mountains were ſcattered, 'the *perpetual* hills did bow.' The goſpel is called 'the *everlaſting* goſpel,' Rev. xiv. 6. yet it muſt ceaſe to be preached, when it ſhall be needed no longer. Jonah ſaith, 'The earth with her bars was about me '*for ever*; yet haſt thou brought up my life from cor-'ruption, O JEHOVAH, my God.' Jonah, ii. 6. But it would be the higheſt abſurdity, upon the ſuppoſition that the word לעלם *legnolam*, here rendered *for ever*, properly ſignifies *without end*, for him to ſay, that his life was brought up from corruption; and therefore we know that he could not uſe it in that ſenſe, becauſe, on the third day he was delivered from his dreadful priſon. There is no doubt but the time that he was there, ſeemed an age; and while he was thus ſhut up, there was no intermiſſion to the darkneſs and diſtreſs that overwhelmed him; and therefore he might ſay, with propriety, that 'the earth with her bars was about him 'for ever,' (i. e. *perpetually*, *without ceſſation*) during the period he remained in the fiſh's belly. But, as it would be a work of much time and labour to mention all the paſſages where the word tranſlated *for ever* evidently intends only an age, or period, I ſhall juſt direct you to the following, which you may look over at your leiſure:

Gen. xiii. 15. xliii. 9. xliv. 32.---Exod. xii. 14, 17, 24. xxi. 6. xxvii. 21. xxviii. 43. xxix. 9, 28. xxx. 21. xxxi. 16, 17. xxxii. 13.---Lev. iii. 17. vi. 13, 18, 20, 22. vii. 34, 36. x. 9, 15. xvi. 29, 31. xxiii. 14, 21, 31, 41. xxiv. 3. xxv. 30, 46.---Numb. x. 8. xv. 15. xviii. 8, 19. xix. 10.---Deut. iv. 40. xv. 17. xviii. 5. xxviii. 46.---Joſhua, iv. 7. xiv. 9.---1 Sam. ii. 30. iii. 13. xxvii. 12. xxviii. 2.---1 Kings, xii. 7.---2 Kings, v. 27. ---2 Chron. x. 7.

Here

Here are more than fifty paſſages where the word rendered *for ever* intends only *age* or *ages*; to which many more might be added.

Now, the rule for underſtanding words is this--- What *muſt* be the meaning of the word in *many* places, and what *may* be the meaning in *all*, is its *true* ſenſe.

Friend. Although the ſingle word *for ever*, in theſe paſſages, ſeems evidently to intend certain unknown, *limited* periods, yet, what can you do with thoſe texts that ſay, the miſery of the wicked ſhall endure *for ever and ever?*

Minister. Indeed they are terrible threatenings; and, no doubt, will be fully executed.

Friend. But do you imagine that ſuch paſſages as the following can intend leſs than *endleſs miſery?* Rev. xiv. 11. 'And the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth 'up *for ever and ever*; and they have no reſt, day nor 'night, who worſhip the beaſt and his image, and who-'ſoever receiveth the mark of his name.' Rev. xix. 3. 'And her ſmoke roſe up *for ever and ever.*' Rev. xx. 10. 'And the devil, that deceived them, was caſt 'into the lake of fire and brimſtone, where the beaſt 'and the falſe prophet are, and ſhall be tormented, day 'and night, *for ever and ever.*'

Minister. I confeſs you have propoſed a difficulty, that I ſhould judge to be unanſwerable, were it not for the following conſiderations:

1ſt, If *for ever and ever* is a longer time than *for ever*, which muſt be granted, then is there ſome proportion between them: thus, if *for ever* intends an *age*, *period*, or ſometimes *ages*, *for ever and ever* may intend *ages*, an *age* of *ages*, or *ages* of *ages:* but any *proportion* at all between two periods, ſuppoſes both *to have an end*, or there could *be no proportion.*

2dly, I find a time promiſed when 'there ſhall be 'no more death, neither ſorrow nor crying; neither 'ſhall there be any more pain; for the former things 'are (or ſhall then be) paſſed away. And he that ſat 'upon the throne ſaid, Behold I make all things new.

'And

'And he said unto me, (John) Write, for these words 'are true and faithful.' Rev. xxi. 4, 5.

3dly, I think there is sufficient reason, from the words of St. Peter, in his second epistle, third chapter, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12 verses, to conclude, that as the earth was once overflowed with water, and became truly a lake of water, wherein the world of ungodly men perished, so, by the general conflagration, the same shall become literally the lake of fire and brimstone, in which the wicked shall be punished after the day of judgment: but I also think, that the 13th verse of the same chapter, compared with Rev. xxi. 1. Isaiah, lxv. 17. and lxvi. 22. more than intimates, that the new heaven and earth shall be created out of the substance of the old, dissolved by the fire: that the *new earth* shall no more have a *sea* therein, seems to imply, that in its former state it had a *sea*, or why this expression, 'And 'there was no *more* sea?' Now, if this hypothesis is right, the following will be the true state of the case, *viz.*---

The lake of fire is expressly declared to be 'the se-'cond death,' Rev. xx. 14. The earth, in its burnt, melted, and dissolved state, will be the general lake of fire and brimstone, according to the verses above cited from St. Peter. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, created out of the substance of the old, in which there will be no more sea, either of water or of liquid fire; consequently, the lake of fire, or second death, (which are declared to be synonimous) must end, and of course the punishment of the second death must then cease.

4thly, The *smoke* of their torment is to ascend up *for ever and ever*, and they are to be tormented day and night: but, as the smoke of the burning earth must cease, when its substance is entirely dissolved or melted, and all combustible bodies are consumed; and as it is intimated in Job, xxvi. 10. that day and night shall come to an end; and in Rev. xxi. 25. it is said of the New Jerusalem, 'And the gates of it shall not be 'shut

'shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there.' For all these reasons I cannot be altogether persuaded, that their being tormented *day and night, for ever and ever*, during which time the smoke of their torment shall constantly ascend, is quite equal to *endless misery*; especially as there shall come a time when *death* shall be no more, *pain* shall be no more, *sorrow* shall be no more, *smoke* shall probably ascend no more, and, peradventure, *night* shall be no more.*

5thly,

* That there will be a revolution of *day and night* in the *ages* succeeding the general judgment, is, I think, very plain from Rev. xx. 10. where the devil, beast, and false prophet are said to be tormented day and night εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων, *eis tous aionas ton aionon, to the age of ages.* But is there not proof that night literally shall cease? Let the following considerations be attended to.---

1. Does not *darkness* of every kind, whether spiritual or material, stand in opposition to God? 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' 1 John, i. 5. Hence he is called 'the Father of lights.' James, i. 17. And hence also the first work of God upon the chaos was to dispel darkness and restore light. Gen. i. 2, 3 And for the same purpose does the spirit of God still work in opening men's eyes, and turning them from darkness to light; shining into their hearts to dispel their darkness, in opposition to the god of this age, whose work it is to blind their minds, and involve them in still greater darkness. The apostle, addressing those who were partakers of this enlightening spirit, says, 'Ye were 'sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.'

2. In the present state, where neither absolute good nor absolute evil takes place without mixture, there is also a mixture of light and darkness in the revolution of day and night.

3. But in the New Jerusalem state, where the servants of God are totally delivered from mental darkness, there will be continual light, to the total exclusion of darkness---'there shall be no 'night there.' Rev. xxi. 25.

4. But in the future age of punishment there will be still the revolution of day and night---even to the age of ages; to intimate, perhaps that, however severely the wicked may be punished, yet it will by no means be inconsistent with mercy and love; but that the Divine spirit will continue to operate in reconciling sinners to God, calling them out of darkness into his marvellous light, until their darkness be expelled by his shining into their hearts; giving them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, who is the *true light*. And when all shall be filled with the effulgent glory of him who is the image of

5thly, But the great reaſon of all, why I do not conceive that *for ever and ever* doth certainly intend *endleſs duration*, is, becauſe I find the words as often uſed for *times* and *periods* that muſt have an end, as you find them uſed for the miſery of the wicked. You bring three paſſages, which are all that are to be found in the whole Bible, where they are uſed in relation to that ſubject; I ſhall now invalidate thoſe evidences for *endleſs damnation*, by bringing an equal number of texts, where you will allow the words are uſed in a limited ſenſe.

Friend. Is it poſſible that you can find any ſuch paſſages in the Bible? Pray ſhew them to me.

Miniſter. Iſaiah, xxx. 8. 'Now go, write it before 'them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be 'for the time to come, *for ever and ever.*'

See Jer. vii. 1---7. The 7th verſe is, 'Then will I 'cauſe you to dwell in this place, in the land that I 'gave to your fathers, *for ever and ever.*'

Jer. xxv. 5. 'Turn ye again, now, every one from 'his evil way, and every one from the evil of your 'doings, and dwell in the land Jehovah hath given 'unto you, and to your fathers, *for ever and ever.*'

Theſe paſſages are as many, and as ſtrongly expreſſed, as thoſe which you brought to prove *endleſs miſery*; and yet nothing can be more evident than that they cannot intend *endleſs duration*.---Here theſe periods muſt be limited by the great conflagration; and thus (for ought that appears as yet) the miſery of the wicked *may* be *limited*, notwithſtanding the uſe of thoſe expreſſions to ſet forth its dreadful continuance to unknown ages; at leaſt, thoſe words do not neceſſarily imply, that they ſhall never, as long as God lives, be delivered from their ſins and conſequent ſufferings.

of the inviſible God, and the brightneſs of his glory, then God himſelf, who is light, and in whom is no darkneſs at all, *ſhall be all in all*: then darkneſs, both ſpiritual and material, will be intirely deſtroyed, and univerſal light and love will eternally prevail throughout the immenſe dominions of Jehovah.

If we were always to read *for ever and ever* ENDLESS, we ſhould ſet the Scriptures at variance; and no criticiſm could ever reconcile them. Try, for inſtance, to reconcile Pſalm cii. 25, 26. with Pſalm cxlviii. 6. 'Of 'old haſt thou laid the foundation of the earth, and 'the heavens are the work of thy hands. They ſhall 'periſh, but thou ſhalt endure: yea, all of them ſhall 'wax old like a garment; as a veſture ſhalt thou 'change them, and they ſhall be changed.'---'He hath 'alſo eſtabliſhed them *for ever and ever:* he hath made 'a decree which ſhall not paſs.'

Now, if the words *for ever and ever* ſignify *without end*, then there is a contradiction that cannot be reconciled; but only underſtand them *ages of ages**, (as, indeed, they ought to be rendered) and the whole difficulty vaniſhes at once.

* Εις αιωνα αιωνων, *eis aiona aionon*, which in our tranſlation is rendered *for ever and ever*, Rev. xiv. 11. The following note on this phraſe is quoted from Stonehouſe, p. 194.---

'We find this remarkable expreſſion in three places of the Re-'velations: chap. xix. 3. denounced upon the great whore; chap. 'xx. 10. denounced upon Satan, the beaſt, and the falſe prophet; 'and, in the text quoted, denounced upon the worſhippers of the 'beaſt. In the common editions of the Greek Teſtament the 'reading is, εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων, *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, 'to the aions of the aions. But the authority of ſuch reading is diſ-'puted, becauſe theſe paſſages are found in Andreas, Archbiſhop of 'Cæſarea, as follows, viz. the former two, εις αιωνα αιωνων, *eis 'aiona aionon, to an æon of aions*; the latter, εις αιωνα αιωνος, *eis 'aiona aionos, to the aionion aion*, which are equivalent, according to 'Bengelius's computation of the word aion.

'Andreas wrote upon the Revelations about the latter end of the 'fourth century, and doubtleſs both had and uſed the beſt copies 'of it. For this and other reaſons, (ſee Bengelius) the collectors 'of the various readings of the New Teſtament *freely prefer* the 'reading found in Andreas's copy to that of the uſual editions of 'our Greek Teſtament, where doubtleſs we find in many places 'the wrong reading.

'According to this reading, the puniſhment of the wicked is not 'threatened to continue *for* the aion of aions; but εις αιωνα αιωνων, 'eis aiona aionon, and, which amounts to the ſame, εις αιωνα αιωνος, 'eis aiona aionos, *to* the aionion aion:' in plain Engliſh, *to the age of ages.*

Suppoſe a perſon ſhould read Rev. xx. 11. and xxi. 1. 'And I ſaw a great white throne, and him that ſat 'upon it, from whoſe face the earth and the heaven 'fled away; and there was found no place for them. 'And I ſaw a new heaven and a new earth; for the 'firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed away; and 'there was no more ſea;' and ſhould then ſay, 'Theſe viſions cannot be true, becauſe Solomon hath ſaid, 'One generation paſſeth away, and another cometh, 'but the earth abideth *for ever*,' Eccleſ. i. 4. And God 'laid the foundations of the earth, that it ſhould not 'be removed *for ever*.' Pſalm civ. 5. 'The world 'alſo is eſtabliſhed, that it cannot be moved,' Pſalm xciii. 1. See alſo Pſalm lxxviii. 69. and xcvi. 10. What would you think of ſuch reaſoning? Juſt ſo weak muſt all reaſoning againſt the Univerſal Reſtoration be from the words *for ever*, and *for ever and ever*, being applied to ſtates of future miſery, if God has promiſed to put an end to them all, by reconciling all things to himſelf, deſtroying ſin, and introducing a new creation, and a ſtate of univerſal and permanent happineſs: for, if ſuch promiſes really exiſt, and their exiſtence can be demonſtrated, all reaſoning againſt them muſt be vain and futile.

Friend. It is certain, that when the word *for ever* is applied to things of this life and world, it intends a *period*; but when applied to ſpiritual matters, and things of another world, it muſt be *endleſs*, according to my judgment; and I am apt to think you will find it ſo too.

Miniſter. I am certain, that you will ſoon be convinced to the contrary. The apoſtle, ſpeaking of Chriſt, ſays, 'But this man, after he had offered one 'ſacrifice for ſins, *for ever** ſat down on the right hand 'of

* The Greek word in Heb. x. 12. is διηνεκης, *dienekes*; it occurs only in the Epiſtle to the Hebrews. chap. x. 1. v. i. 3. x 14. which places let the reader conſult. The word is derived from δια, *dia*, *through*, and ηνεκης, *enekes*, *extenſive*, *prolonged*. It is twice rendered *continually*; yet evidently with a view to a certain period, as in

'of God; from henceforth, expecting till his enemies 'be made his footstool.' Heb. x. 12, 13. You will please to notice, that Christ's sitting down in the heavens, on the right hand of God, is not a circumstance belonging to *this world*, or *the things of time*; and he is to sit there *for ever*; and yet that period, which, according to your hypothesis, must be *endless*, is expressly limited by the sacred writings: the heavens have received him 'until the times (seasons, or ages) of restitution of all things, (that is, till the beginning, and 'not the ending of those times) which God hath spoken 'of by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world

in chap. x. 1. sacrifices were offered *continually* during the Mosaic œconomy. Chap. vii. 3. Melchisedec is a priest *continually*. If Melchisedec be Christ, as I suppose, then his *continual* priesthood can be of no longer duration than the mediatorial age; at the conclusion of which the great work of the reconciliation of all things being finished, there can no longer be any exercise of his priesthood; see Psalm cx. 4. which Montanus literally translates, *tu sacerdos in seculum super verbum meum, Melchisedec*, 'thou art a priest to the age 'upon my word, O Melchisedec.' Chap. x. 12. 'He for ever, *or* 'continually, sat down on the right hand of God.' Sitting at the right hand of God denotes a *state*, rather than a *place*, and is expressive of the power of Christ during his mediation, whether he be in heaven or on earth; but when he shall have finished his whole work, by subduing all things then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. 1 Cor. xv. 24---28. So that his sitting at the right hand of God is for a period, though the longest of all periods. Chap. x. 14. 'By one offering 'he hath perfected for ever (*continually*) them that are sanctified.' ---Even here αἰωνιος, *dieneckes*, must mean that period which is bounded by the reign of Christ, for revelation does not extend beyond that; and what will take place afterwards, we are no where told, except that 'there shall be no more curse, and that the Father 'shall be all in all.'

As the number of Scriptures which are translated *for ever, everlasting*, &c. is very great, it is probable that Mr. Winchester did not consult them all in the original; for he seems to have reasoned on Heb. x. 12. as though the Greek had been αιων, *aion*. A little inaccuracy seems also to have slipt him here, as though Christ's sitting on the right hand of God was descriptive of *place* rather than *state*. This by no means affects the general argument; yet Mr. Marsom has assumed great importance from the discovery. See his book on Destruction, vol. ii. p. 14.

'began.' Acts, iii. 21. And the whole New Teſtament teacheth us to wait for the coming of Jeſus from heaven; (1 Theſ. i. 10.) which would be highly abſurd, upon the ſuppoſition that he is *always* to abide there; which yet he muſt, if the word *for ever*, as applied to things of *another* ſtate, intends *endleſs duration*.

Friend. I confeſs I never obſerved this before: but do you know of any paſſage in the New Teſtament, where the words *for ever and ever* certainly intend *limited duration?* For I obſerved, that all the inſtances you brought were from the Old Teſtament.

Miniſter. Yes; Heb. i. 8. 'But unto the ſon he 'ſaith, Thy throne, (in diſtinction from the throne of 'the Father) O God, is *for ever and ever*;' yet we read (1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.) of the *end*, when he ſhall have 'delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Fa-'ther; when he ſhall have put down all rule, and all 'authority and power: then ſhall the ſon alſo himſelf 'be ſubject unto him that put all things under him, that 'God may be all in all.'

Friend. But when Chriſt threatened ſinners with *everlaſting* fire, *everlaſting* puniſhment, and *eternal* damnation, did not his expreſſions naturally convey the idea of *endleſs miſery?* And may not the ſon of God be accuſed of duplicity and deceit, if he did not mean to denounce *puniſhment without end?* And therefore, if we believe his words to be true, as moſt certainly they are, we muſt reject the doctrine of the Reſtoration, which puts an end to a ſtate which is called *everlaſting* by the mouth of truth itſelf.---Are you able to anſwer this fairly?

Miniſter. If I am not able to anſwer this objection, which you have ſtated in the ſtrongeſt manner, I aſſure you I will confeſs myſelf in an error, and ſhall thank you, as an inſtrument, for bringing me to know it. The ſame objection that you make againſt the Reſtoration, the Jews make againſt *Chriſt* and *his religion*; for they argue thus: 'God is an unchangeable being, 'and he declared, in the moſt ſolemn manner, that the 'ordinances of the Levitical diſpenſation ſhould be *ever-'laſting*, and the anointing of Aaron's ſons ſhould be an

'*everlaſting*

'*everlasting* priesthood throughout their generations; '(see Exod. xl. 15. and Lev. xvi. 34.) and therefore we 'must reject the Messiah of the Christians, as an impos-'tor; inasmuch as he pretends to abolish those statutes 'which God hath called *everlasting*, and to set himself 'up as a priest, contrary to the express promise of the 'LORD, who cannot lye, nor repent that Aaron and 'his sons should have an *everlasting* priesthood; and 'therefore, if this is the true Messiah, God meant to 'deceive us when he promised these *everlasting* bless-'ings and privileges, which we must suppose were 'only *for a time*, if Christianity be true; therefore we 'reject it, as being inconsistent with the promises of 'God*.'

It is evident, from this view of the matter, that the Jews reject Christ and his religion upon as good ground as you reject the Universal Restoration, and perhaps better; for you have nothing to plead against the Restoration but some threatenings of punishments, which are called *everlasting*, or *eternal*, in our translation; but they plead express promises of the *everlasting* continuance of their church-state and worship, in opposition to Christianity. But if it be true, that both the Hebrew and Greek words, which our translators have rendered by the English word *everlasting*, do not intend *endless duration*, but *a hidden period* or *periods*, then the ground is changed at once, and the Jews have no right to object against Christianity, because God promised a continuance of their temple worship for *a certain age*, or *hidden period*---nor the Christians to reject the Universal Restoration, because God hath threatened the rebellious with such dreadful punishments, which shall endure through periods, expressed in the same terms.

* That the Jews did reason thus against Christianity is more than probable, from the accusation brought against Stephen, which runs thus: 'We have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall 'destroy this place, and *shall change the customs which Moses deli-'vered us*.' Acts, vi. 14. The Jews thought their law would never be changed, for the same words which described its duration, were used also in relation to the being of God.

It is indeed confeſſed by ſome of the moſt learned Jews, that they have no word in their language which abſolutely ſignifies *endleſs duration*; and therefore they can only argue the *endleſs* continuance of any thing from its nature, and not merely from the words rendered *for ever*, or *everlaſting:* And if this is the truth of the caſe, (as who can deny it?) then neither did JEHOVAH ſpeak to deceive the children of Iſrael, when he promiſed them bleſſings of ſuch long continuance, which have ended long ago, and which are never to be reſtored by virtue of that covenant which he made with their fathers when he brought them out of Egypt, but by the new covenant, which he *will* make with them, when he ſhall return them to their own land; nor did the ſon of God ſpeak to deceive when he threatened the wicked with thoſe puniſhments, which ſhall not end *till they have anſwered the purpoſes for which it ſeems reaſonable to believe they ſhall be inflicted*, viz. to bring them down, and humble their proud and ſtubborn hearts; which ſhall be done during the periods of his kingdom, before he ſhall have delivered it up to the Father, that God may be ALL IN ALL.

FRIEND. But if I ſhould grant that the word αιωνιον, *aionion*, doth not, even in the New Teſtament, always ſignify *endleſs duration*, yet what would you gain by it, ſince it plain that Chriſt hath ſet *the happineſs of the righteous* and *the miſery of the wicked* one againſt the other, and hath expreſſed the continuance of both by the ſame word αιωνιον, *aionion*, in St. Matt. xxv. 46.? Here the puniſhment of the wicked, and the life of the righteous are both declared to be αιωνιον, *aionion*, or *eternal*, without diſtinction: now, can you ſhew me any paſſage of Scripture where the ſame word is applied to two different things, whoſe exiſtence is not the ſame, or the time of their continuance not alike?

MINISTER. Fairly ſtated! And if it be not as fairly anſwered, it ſhall be looked upon as an inſuperable difficulty. But happily there is a paſſage, in Hab. iii. 6. where the ſame word is uſed for very different things:

things: 'He ſtood, and meaſured the earth; he be-'held and drove aſunder the nations; and the *ever-'laſting* mountains were ſcattered, the *perpetual* hills 'did bow: his ways are *everlaſting*.' In our tranſlation the mountains, and the ways of God, are called *everlaſting*, and the hills *perpetual*; but in the original, the word עד *gnad* is applied to the mountains, and the word עלם *gnolam* to the hills, and the ways of God. But whether we argue from the original, or from the tranſlation, it makes no difference: the queſtion is, Are the mountains or the hills *eternal* in the ſame ſenſe in which the ways of God are? If ſo, the earth muſt have exiſted *coeval* with the ways of JEHOVAH, and the hills and mountains muſt never be removed while his ways endure; and, as his ways can never be deſtroyed, the abſolute eternity, not of the earth only, but of its preſent form, its mountains and hills, muſt be inferred, contrary to Iſaiah, xl. 4. xliv. 10.---Ezek. xxxviii. 20.---2 Pet. iii. 7, 10, 11, 12.---Rev. xvi. 20. xx. 11. Nay, even in this very text, the ways of God are ſpoken of as being of a different nature from the mountains, which were *ſcattered*, and the hills, which did *bow*.

Thus, no ſolid argument can be drawn from the application of the ſame word to *different* things to prove that they ſhall be equal in their continuance, unleſs their nature be the ſame.

Thus, in the Greek New Teſtament, in Rom. xvi. 25. we read of the myſtery which hath been kept ſecret, from χρονοις αιωνιοις, *chronois aioniois*, and, in the 26th verſe, we find, that it is now made known by the commandment τε αιωνιε Θεε, *tou aioniou Theou*. But muſt it be argued, that, becauſe αιωνιος, *aioniois*, is applied to times, and αιωνιον, *aionion*, to God, therefore *times* are as ancient as JEHOVAH, and muſt continue while he exiſts? The abſurdity of this is too glaring. Our tranſlators have rendered χρονοις αιωνιοις, *chronois aioniois*, '*ſince* '*the world began*,' inſtead of '*eternal times*;' and have thereby ſhewn their judgment to be, that words cannot change the ſubjects to which they are applied, but the

the meaning of the words must be determined by the nature of the subjects.

In Jer. xxviii. 8. the word לעלם *legnolam* is used in the Hebrew; but the translators did not think themselves obliged to render it '*from everlasting*,' or '*from* '*eternity*;' as it would have been highly absurd to have read '*eternal* prophets,' or 'prophets which were from '*eternity*;' and therefore have rendered it '*of old*,' though it is a stronger word than עד *gnad*, which they have translated '*eternity*' in Isaiah lvii. 15.

Many other instances of the like nature might be brought; but these are fully sufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind, that nothing can be concluded in favour of *endless punishment*, from the word αιωνιον, *aionion*, being used to set forth the duration of it, as well as the duration of that life which our Saviour promises to the righteous.

But upon the supposition that our Saviour intends no more by the 'life eternal,' in the 46th verse of the xxvth of St. Matthew's gospel, than he doth in the 34th verse, by the 'kingdom prepared from the foun-'dation of the world,' (which it would be hard to prove) then an answer might be given, without all this labour, in this manner, *viz.* that as the Father hath appointed Christ a kingdom, so he hath also appointed his saints a kingdom; (see St. Luke, xxii. 29, 30. Rev. ii. 26, 27. iii. 21.) but as the kingdom which the Father hath given to Christ, as Mediator and as Judge, shall *end*, when he shall have subdued all things, and put down all rule, and authority, and power; (see 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.) so, of consequence, that kingdom, which is given to the saints or overcomers to subdue the nations, shall also *end*, when they shall be all subdued, and brought to submit. But as the glory of Christ shall not be *lessened* but *increased*, when God shall be ALL in ALL, so the happiness of the saints shall be so far from ending, or being *diminished* at that period, that it shall then arrive at the summit of perfection; but shall never close nor decrease while JEHOVAH endures.

Some

Some time ago, a woman came to hear me, and I happened to mention in my ſermon, that Chriſt's mediatorial kingdom was called *everlaſting*, or αιωνιον, *aionion*, but that *it muſt come to an end* when the kingdom ſhould be delivered up to the Father, when he ſhould have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. After ſermon ſhe was aſked how ſhe liked; ſhe anſwered, 'Not at all: he ſays, The *everlaſting* kingdom 'of Chriſt ſhall end; and I never heard of ſuch a 'thing before in all my life; and I am ſure it muſt be 'contrary to Scripture.' The perſon who aſked her told her that there was ſuch a text ſomewhere, ſhe could not tell exactly where to find it. But the woman perſiſted in it that there was no ſuch text, and went away full of prejudice. Now had this paſſage of Scripture been in the book of the Revelations, it would not have been ſo much to be wondered at that ſhe had never heard of it; but when we conſider, that this is expreſſed in that part of the xvth chapter of St. Paul's firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians, which is in the *burial ſervice*, what ſhall we ſay?

Thus, if *Chriſt*'s kingdom *ſhall end*, much more *Satan*'s! If *rewards*, as ſuch, ſhall ceaſe, how much more *puniſhments!* If the *everlaſting* kingdom of the ſaints, which they ſhall poſſeſs *for ever and ever*, (ſee Dan. vii. 18, 27.) ſhall end, or be ſwallowed up in that kingdom of boundleſs love, where God ſhall be ALL IN ALL, how much more ſhall all ſin, pain, ſorrow, and death ceaſe, and have no more a name in God's creation!

FRIEND. But ſuppoſing the doctrine of *endleſs miſery* to be a truth, how would you expect to find it expreſſed in the Bible?

MINISTER. I ſhould have a right to expect, in the firſt place, that there would be no promiſes in the Scripture to the contrary; no ſuch paſſages as theſe---'For I have ſworn by myſelf, the word is gone out of 'my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, that 'unto me every knee ſhall bow, and every tongue 'ſhall ſwear.' Iſaiah, xlv. 23. Mind well, EVERY TONGUE

TONGUE SHALL SWEAR---Swearing allegiance, as every civilian will tell you, implies *pardon*, *reception*, and *protection* on the part of the king, and a hearty *renouncing of rebellion*, *true subjection*, and *willing obedience* on the part of the rebels. Kings of the earth may be deceived, but God cannot; he will never accept of any feigned subjection; and therefore all that swear shall swear in truth and righteousness; so shall rebellion cease, and disobedience be no more.

The apostle St. Paul seems to quote this passage of Scripture with some variation in his epistle to the Philippians, chap. ii. 9, 10, 11. where, speaking of the sufferings of Christ, and the consequences of the same, he says, 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, 'and given him a name which is above every name; 'that at (*or* in) the name of *Jesus* every knee shall 'bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and 'things under the earth; and that every tongue should 'confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God 'the Father.' Now this confession appears to me to imply a *willing subjection to the authority of the Saviour*, brought about by the operation of the blessed Spirit; for the same apostle saith, 'Wherefore, I give you to 'understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of 'God, calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can 'say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.' 1 Cor. xii. 3.

Then the argument, thrown into a syllogistical form, will run thus:

If every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, then shall all rebellion cease.

But the first is true, therefore also the last. If every tongue shall confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, and no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, then shall the Holy Ghost work effectually in every man. As the major is proved by Phil. ii. 11. and the minor by 1 Cor. xii. 3. the conclusion must be evident to a demonstration.

Friend.

Friend. I acknowledge, that, in the preſent ſtate, no man can ſay, that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt; but when they ſhall ſtand before his bar, they ſhall confeſs him Lord, to the glory of God the Father, *by force*.

Minister. But St. Paul ſpeaks generally, 'that no 'man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Holy 'Ghoſt:' he does not mention *time* or *place*, but repreſents the matter impoſſible; beſides, every expreſſion here uſed implies *a willing*, and not a *forced ſubjection*; as bowing *in the name* of *Jeſus*, and confeſſing him to be *Lord* of all to the *glory* of *God* the *Father*.

Friend. But we are ſometimes told, that God is as much glorified by the eternal damnation of ſome, as by the eternal ſalvation of others.

Minister. I have indeed, heard ſome aſſert the ſame; but as the glory of God is the ultimate end of all that he doth, we may properly aſk, why he ſhould take any pains to ſave mankind?

But, above all, there is one objection that may be brought againſt this idea, which is hard to anſwer; and that is, God hath ſaid, 'For I have no pleaſure 'in the death of him that dieth, ſaith the Lord God. 'Say unto them, As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have 'no pleaſure in the death of the wicked; but that the 'wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn 'ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O 'houſe of Iſrael?' Ezek. xviii. 23. xxxiii. 11. It is evident to me, that God muſt take pleaſure in what glorifies his name; and as he hath ſworn, that he takes no pleaſure at all in the death of the wicked, it muſt be ſet down for a truth, that *puniſhment*, without having the reformation and ſubjection of rebels for its end, is unworthy of the Being we adore; and even now it is called '*his ſtrange work*,' and '*his ſtrange 'act*. But to proceed: if *endleſs* miſery were a truth, I ſhould not expect that the myſtery of the will of God, which he hath made known unto his choſen, according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf, would be, 'That, in the diſpenſation of 'the

'the fulneſs of times, he might gather together in one, 'or rehead) all things in Chriſt, both which are in 'heaven, and which are in earth.' Epheſ. i. 9, 10. Far leſs ſhould I expect to find, that 'It pleaſed the 'Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell; and, 'having made peace by the blood of his croſs, by him 'to reconcile all things to himſelf; by him, I ſay, whe-'ther they be things in earth or things in heaven.' Col. i. 19, 20. And I am not able to imagine how St. John's viſion (Rev. v. 13.) could be juſt, if *endleſs damnation* is true, where he ſays, 'And every crea-'ture who is in heaven, and on the earth, and under 'the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are 'in them, heard I, ſaying, Bleſſing, and honour, and 'glory, and power be unto him that ſitteth upon the 'throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.' In the nature of things, it appears impoſſible to me to believe theſe paſſages to be ſtrictly and literally true, if *endleſs miſery* be a truth: therefore I ſay, that I ſhould not expect any *intimations*, far leſs *abſolute promiſes*, that God would deſtroy death, the works of the devil, and make all things new, with many others of the like nature.

We find it promiſed, that every knee ſhall bow: and leſt ſome might ſay, that *every* knee meant only *ſome* knees, it is explained, by the inſpired apoſtle, to mean *all* things in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth: and not only ſo, but every tongue ſhall *ſwear*, and *confeſs*, that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord to the glory of God the Father; which could not be, except all were reconciled to him, whether things in heaven or things in earth; wherefore this is alſo promiſed; and, in conſequence of their being ſubdued, humbled, made obedient, and reconciled, they ſhall be *reheaded in Chriſt*, never more to go aſtray, nor break that band of eternal union, which ſhall bind all together in one body, joined to one head; and all ſhall give never-ceaſing praiſe to God and the Lamb, *world without end*.

As endleſs damnation appears to me to be *againſt the promiſes*, I cannot hold it as an article of my faith; but

but were there no promiſes or intimations to the contrary in Scripture, I ſhould not require it to be threatened in any ſtronger terms than it is; I ſhould believe it as a truth, though I might not be able, at preſent, to ſee the propriety and equity thereof; I ſhould never ſuffer my weak reaſon to gainſay Divine Revelation. But my difficulty ariſes from theſe expreſs promiſes of God, which compoſe ſo great a part of that book which is given us as a rule of faith and practice; and which promiſes expreſſly aſſert a future ſtate of things beyond ſin, ſorrow, pain, and death of every kind; when all things ſhall be made new; and death, the laſt enemy of God, Chriſt, and man, ſhall be deſtroyed, ſwallowed up in victory; and ſin, which is its ſting, ſhall be no more in exiſtence; and tears ſhall be wiped away from all faces.

But, though I have acknowledged that I ſhould not dare to diſpute the doctrine of *endleſs damnation*, unleſs God had given *intimations*, and even *promiſes*, to the contrary, ſince I find ſeveral dreadful threatenings in Scripture, in which the word αιωνιον *, *aionion*, or *everlaſting*,

* The Greek word αιων, *aion*, and its derivatives are ſo rendered in our Engliſh verſion as to make the ſubject of future puniſhment obſcure to an Engliſh reader; this note is intended to aſcertain their meaning.—

Leigh, Kircher, Parkhurſt, Schrevelius, and others, render αιων, *aion*, by *eternity*, and αιωνιος, *aionios*, ſay they, is *eternal*, *everlaſting*. But I appeal from theſe great authorities to the common ſenſe of mankind, and affirm, that αιων, *aion*, does not mean eternity, nor αιωνιος, *aionios*, eternal or everlaſting, for which I aſſign the following reaſons—

I. The above lexicographers allow, that αιων, *aion*, is taken for an hundred years—for the duration of a man's life, which is about ſeventy years—for any meaſurement of time, eſpecially if it be of long duration, or if its termination be hidden—yea, for a year. It is conceived, that theſe conceſſions (which they were conſtrained to make, from the common uſe of the word in the Scriptures and in Greek writers) greatly weaken the force of their aſſertion, that '*αιων, aion, means eternity*' ſeeing it often is taken for a limited period, and ſometimes even for a very ſhort one too

II. That the writers of the New Teſtament do not uſe the word αιων, *aion*, to convey the idea of eternity is evident, becauſe there

ing, is joined with the punishment of the wicked; yet a very little attention will shew us, that the felicity of the

are *different aions* spoken of, and one *aion* is represented as succeeding another. 'The children of *this aion* are wiser in their generation than the children of light.' Luke, xvi. 8. 'The children of *this aion* marry and are given in marriage' Luke, xx. 34. The phrase *this aion* occurs two and twenty times in the New Testament, and wherever we meet with it, it necessarily stands opposed to *some other aion*; and therefore we read of '*this aion, and* '*also that which is to come.*' Ephes. i. 20. Mat. xii. 32.—— '*That aion*, and the resurrection of the dead.' Luke. xx. 35 Now we cannot possibly understand these Scriptures as meaning *this eternity*, and *that eternity*; for eternity can be but one, and implies an unity of consistence and simple continuance: I would therefore render αιων, *aion*, by *age*, and its plural by *ages*. It is presumed this would give a just and consistent sense to the word in every place where it is found.

III. Our English translation, indeed, generally renders αιων, *aion*, by *world*. and the plural *worlds*; by this, the glaring absurdity of making our Lord and his apostles talk of *eternities* is avoided; but at the same time a deception is passed upon the English reader, who does not know that when he reads of this world and the world to come, it ought to be this age and the age to come.

It is not a little singular that when αιων *aion*, occurs as a noun, it should be so frequently rendered world; and when as an adjective the sense should be *eternal*, *everlasting*, *ever*, &c. yet so our translation runs. The impropriety of this will appear, if we take some of the passages, and enquire whether *world and its relatives*, will do as a translation of αιων, *aion*, *and its derivatives*. Mat. vi 13. 'Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory (εις τους αιωνας, '*eis tous aionas*) *to the worlds*.' John, vi. 51. 'He that eateth of 'this bread shall live (εις τον αιωνα, *eis ton aiona*) *to the world*.' Chap. xii. 26. 'He shall not die (εις τον αιωνα, *eis ton aiona*) *to the* '*world*.' Rev. xiv. 11. 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth 'up (εις αιωνας αιωνων, *eis aionas aionon*) *to a world of worlds*.' These texts, to which many more might be added, are sufficient to shew, that *world* is not a proper translation of αιων, *aion*, because in many places it cannot possibly bear that sense; but it may be rendered *age* every where.

With respect to the derivatives αιωνιος, αιωνια, αιωνιος, αιωνιον, *aionos*, *aioni*, *aionios*, *aionion*, &c. the relatives of *world* will by no means be a proper rendering of these; for instance, Mat. xix 16. 'What shall I do that I may have (ζωην αιωνιον, *zoen aionion*) '*worldly life?*' 1 Tim. vi. 12. 'Fight the good fight of faith, lay 'hold on (αιωνιε ζωης, *aioniou zoes*) *worldly life*.' Rom. xvi. 26. 'According

the righteous is promiſed in much ſtronger language than the miſery of the wicked is threatened in the Scriptures.

I remark,

'cording to the commandment (*κατ αιωνιον Θεου, kat aionion Theou*) 'of the worldly God.' Heb. ix. 14. 'Chriſt, who (*δια πνευματος αιωνιου, dia pneumatos aionion*) through the worldly ſpirit offered himſelf to God.'

IV. From the above remarks it is evident, that neither *eternity* nor *world* are a proper tranſlation of *αιων, aion*; let us now enquire whether *eternal, everlaſting, for ever*, are proper renderings for *αιωνιον, aionion*, &c.

1. It is a rule that no grammarian will diſpute, *that no adjective can have greater force than the ſubſtantive from which it is derived*; thus *black* cannot mean more than *blackneſs*, *white* cannot mean more than *whiteneſs*, ſo neither can *αιωνιον, aionion*, mean more than *αιων, aion*. The palpable departure from this rule in our tranſlation of the Scriptures muſt be aſcribed to ſyſtem, which often has an unhappy influence even upon the minds of men who are otherwiſe learned, prudent, and good.

2. As *αιωνιον, aionion*, is derived from *αιων, aion*, and has relation to it as an adjective to its ſubſtantive, it can only deſcribe the duration of ſomething relating to that particular *aion* or age ſpoken of, and with which it is connected.

That this is the meaning of aionion in the Septuagint is very certain, for we there read of the aionion covenant of circumciſion, Gen. xvii. 13.---The aionion covenant of prieſthood, Numb. xxv. 13.---The aionion ſtatute of the day of atonement, Lev. xvi. 34. &c. &c. It would be an affront to Scripture and common ſenſe both, to aſcribe *eternity* to theſe things merely becauſe they are ſaid to be of *aionion* duration; for it is certain that the aion or age to which all theſe things related, is expired and gone---the aionian covenants and ſtatutes, &c. waxed old, and have long ago vaniſhed away, Heb. viii. 13.---alſo, the aionion hills, Gen. xlix. 26. will melt and be diſſolved, when the aion or age of the world ſhall end, and the earth, and all that is therein, ſhall be burnt up, 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11. The proper idea of aionion ſeems therefore to be *age-laſting*; as the *age-laſting* covenants above mentioned, which continued during the Jewiſh age---the *age-laſting* hills, which ſhall continue during the age of the world---the *ευαγγελιον αιωνιον, evangelion aionion, age-laſting* goſpel, which ſhall continue to be preached during all the ages of the mediator's reign, till the reſtitution of all things be accompliſhed---the *πνευματος αιωνιου, pneumatos aionion*, i. e. the ſpirit who has preſided over the church in all ages, and will continue ſo to do till, by his influence, in the fulneſs of the ages to come, all things will be quickened---*Αιωνιου Θεου, aionion Theou*, i. e. the

I remark, in the firſt place, that the word αιωνιον, *aionion*, rendered *everlaſting* or *eternal*, is uſed much oftener in St. John's goſpel alone, to expreſs the continuance of the life, or well-being of the righteous, than it is uſed in the whole Bible to expreſs the miſery of the wicked; and this remark is ſtrengthened by obſerving, that he never once uſes the word in his whole goſpel, nor in his epiſtles, to ſet forth the duration of puniſhment. See St. John, iii. 15, 16, 36. iv. 14. v. 24. vi. 27, 40, 47, 54, 68. x. 28. xii. 25, 50. xvii. 2, 3. in all which paſſages the word αιωνιον, *aionion*, is uſed to ex-

God that reigns through all the ages, whether paſt, preſent, or to come; or, as St. Paul expreſſes it, βασιλει των αιωνων, *baſileı ton aionon*, *the king of the ages*, 1 Tim. i. 17. As for the eternity of God, we learn it from the neceſſity of his exiſtence.

3. That the word aion and its derivatives, even when applied to God, do not convey the idea of eternal duration, may be ſtill more clearly ſeen by obſerving that we read of a time *before* the aions began, προ των αιωνων, *pro ton aionon*, 1 Cor. ii. 7.---and alſo of the *end* of the aions, συντελεια των αιωνων, *ſynteleia ton aionon*, Heb. ix. 26. I aſk, Can that word which admits of the exiſtence of time *before* the period which it deſcribes began, be expreſſive of eternity paſt? Can that word which admits of an *end* to the duration of the period which it deſcribes, be expreſſive of eternity to come? If not, how then do the oppoſers of the Univerſal doctrine maintain the endleſs duration of future puniſhment, merely becauſe it is a few times ſaid to be aionion in the Scriptures? As for the objection taken from Mat. xxv. 46. where the happineſs of the righteous is called aionion, and therefore the word muſt mean endleſs; it ought to be obſerved, that the life there mentioned is that of the *kingdom* of Chriſt, which kingdom will come to an end, when he ſhall have put down all rule, authority, and power, and have ſubjected all things to himſelf; then he ſhall deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father, that God may be all in all. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. The happineſs of the righteous will then no longer exiſt in the *kingdom ſtate*, but in a more glorious ſtate and degree, under the *ſole* and *immediate* dominion of the Father.

On the whole, it follows, that aionion, as connected with future puniſhment, does not imply eternity of duration, but that there is an aion or age appointed for the puniſhment of the wicked, and therefore their puniſhment is called *aionion* or *age-laſting*; and when that age expires, the puniſhment of it will ceaſe, and the times of the reſtitution of all things will take place, which God hath ſpoken by all his holy prophets. Acts, iii. 21.

preſs

preſs the continuance of the well-being of the righteous.

But not to inſiſt on this, I obſerve, that there are many ſtronger expreſſions (even in our tranſlation) to ſet forth the well-being of the righteous, than any that are uſed as connected with the miſery of the wicked. Iſaiah, xlv. 17. we read, 'Iſrael ſhall be ſaved in JEHOVAH with an *everlaſting* ſalvation; ye ſhall not be 'aſhamed nor confounded *world without end.*' But where do we read, that the miſery of the wicked ſhall have *no end?* The word *endleſs*, or *world without end*, is never once uſed by our tranſlators to expreſs the eternity of puniſhment, in the whole Bible.

We read in 1 Pet. i. 4. of 'an inheritance, *incor-* 'ruptible and undefiled, and that *fadeth not away*, re- 'ſerved in heaven:' and in chap. v. 4. of a crown of 'glory that fadeth not away;' and Heb. xii. 7. of 'a kingdom which cannot be moved.' And our bleſſed Saviour's words are remarkably ſtrong upon this ſubject in many places; as, in St. Luke's goſpel, chap. xx. 35, 36. where he ſays, 'But they 'who ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that 'world, and the (firſt) reſurrection from the dead, 'neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither '*can they die any more*; for they are equal unto the 'angels; and are the children of God, being the chil- 'dren of the reſurrection:' and in St. John, x. 27, 28, 29. we read thus: 'My ſheep hear my voice, and I 'know them, and they follow me; and I give unto 'them eternal life; and they ſhall *never periſh*, neither 'ſhall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, 'who gave them me, is greater than all; and none is 'able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.' In chap. xi. 25, 26. Chriſt ſays, 'I am the reſurrection 'and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were 'dead, yet ſhall he live: and whoſoever liveth and be- 'lieveth in me, ſhall *never die.*' And in chap. vi. 50. he ſays, 'This is the bread that cometh down from 'heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and *not die.*'--- And he expreſſes the perpetuity of heavenly bliſs, and of our enjoyment of the ſame, by adviſing us, ſaying,

'Lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven, where 'neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves 'do not break through nor ſteal.'---'Fear not, little 'flock, for it is your Father's good pleaſure to give 'you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms: 'provide yourſelves bags which wax not old, a trea-'ſure in the heavens that faileth not; where no thief 'approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.' St. Matth. vi. 20. and St. Luke, xii. 32, 33. This is that which St. Paul calleth 'a better and an enduring ſubſtance,' Heb. x. 34. But what ſhall I ſay of the apoſtle's words, 2 Cor. iv. 17? 'For our light affliction, which 'is but for a moment, worketh for us, καθ' υπερβολην εις 'υπερβολην, αιωνιον βαρος δοξης κατεργαζεται ημιν, *kath hyperbolen 'eis hyperbolen, aionion baros doxes katergazetai emin*, a 'glory exceeding αιωνιον, *aionion*, or eternal, *to an exceſs*.' Here is an hyperbole upon an hyperbole; beyond eternal; a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory.

But it is not ſo much by the different words made uſe of to denote the permanency of the felicity of the righteous, from thoſe which are uſed to expreſs the duration of the miſery of the wicked, that I judge of the *continuance of the one* beyond the other, ſo much as from the different ſources from whence they flow, and of their different natures.

The happineſs of thoſe who are reconciled to God ariſes from their union to Chriſt; in which if they continue grounded and ſettled during this preſent life, wherein they paſs through ſo many ſore trials, the union will become ſo permanent, as that it will be impoſſible to diſſolve it; and the very nature of things ſhews, that if we abide firm to the end, through all difficulties, and overcome all thoſe things that would ſeek to ſeparate us from Chriſt, when we come into that ſtate where we ſhall meet with no more temptations, nor any thing that hath the leaſt tendency to draw our minds from God, we muſt, of conſequence, remain attached or united to him while we have an exiſtence. This doctrine was known to David, and therefore he ſaid, 'While I live will I praiſe JEHOVAH; I will ſing praiſes 'unto my God while I have any being.' Pſalm cxlvi. 2.

civ. 33.

civ. 33. It may be proved, that the union ſhall continue between Chriſt and his faithful ones after this life, and ſhall become indiſſoluble; and that neither 'tribulation, nor diſtreſs, nor perſecution, nor famine, 'nor nakedneſs, nor peril, nor ſword; neither death, 'nor life, nor angels, nor principal ties, nor powers, 'nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, 'nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to 'ſeparate us (who abide in him) from the love of God 'which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.' See Rom. viii. 35---39. See alſo St. John, xv. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10.---1 John, ii. 24---28.

The never-ending continuance of the life or ſtate of well-being of the righteous may be certainly inferred, with the greateſt eaſe, from the continuance of the life of Chriſt, who is made an high-prieſt, 'not after the 'law of a carnal commandment, but after the power 'of an endleſs* life.' Heb. vii. 16. And he hath expreſſly declared, 'Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.' St. John, xiv. 19. Thus, as long as the cauſe remains, the effect muſt continue; but the cauſe, even the life of Chriſt, muſt undoubtedly continue to endleſs periods; therefore alſo, the effect, or the life of thoſe who are joined to him in an indiſſoluble union, ſhall continue. The apoſtle Paul underſtood logic as well as any in our days, and he thus reaſons upon this glorious truth; 'The ſpirit itſelf beareth witneſs with 'our ſpirits, that we (who are led by the ſpirit of God, 'and have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby 'we cry, Abba, Father) are the children of God: and 'if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs 'with Chriſt: if ſo be that we ſuffer with him, that 'we may be alſo glorified together.' Rom. viii. 16, 17.

* Ακαταλυτον, *akatalutos*, Heb. vii. 16. *endleſs*, ſay our tranſlators; literally *indiſſoluble*. The word is never connected with puniſhment, and but this once only with life; which, however, ſhews that the ſacred writers ſpeak of *future life* in a different way than they do of *future puniſhment*.

Now,

Now, as Chriſt, the principal heir cannot be diſinherited, ſo neither can thoſe who are joint-heirs with him. The Holy Spirit is given us as the earneſt of our inheritance, and to ſeal us to the day of redemption. 2 Cor. v. 5. Epheſ. i. 13, 14. and iv. 30. Chriſt is the head, and the overcomers through the blood of the Lamb, are the members of his body, and ſhall inherit all things; he will be their God, and they ſhall be his children: he is their life, and he 'will make them pillars in the temple of God, and they ſhall go no more 'out.' Rev. iii. 12. St. Paul ſays, 'When Chriſt, who 'is our life, ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear 'with him in glory.' Col. iii. 4. And St. John ſays, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God: 'therefore the world knoweth us not, becauſe it knew 'him not. Beloved, now are we the ſons of God; 'and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we 'know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like 'him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.' 1 John, iii. 1, 2. Thus we are ſure, from the Scriptures, and from the nature of things, that thoſe who are drawn by the Father, united to the Son, ſealed by the Holy Ghoſt, willingly chooſe the Lord for their portion, and conſtantly adhere to him to the end, ſhall never be ſeparated from him in the future ages: for he himſelf ſaith, 'As the living Father hath ſent me, and I live by the 'Father, ſo he that eateth me, even he ſhall live by me.' St. John, vi. 57. And as Chriſt is the great attracting loadſtone that ſhall finally draw all things to him, it is evident, that he will preſerve *for ever* thoſe whom he hath thoroughly drawn to himſelf, and who have adhered to him through the time of trial. Thus is the life eternal of the righteous, or their endleſs ſtate of well being, expreſſed in much ſtronger language than the miſery of the wicked; and, moreover, has its foundation in the union between Chriſt and his church, and in the nature of things.

Friend. But if the ſpirit of God dwelling in us, and thereby cauſing us to adhere to Chriſt, and to follow him

him through all trials, makes our union to him so perfect, that nothing shall be able to separate us from him to all eternity; since we are confirmed in habits of goodness by free choice, and by oft repeated exercises, why, by the same rule, shall not the misery of the wicked be *endless*, seeing that they have chosen and adhered to evil through life, and by constant practice are confirmed therein? Evil is grown up to a body in them; and it appears to me as difficult to reform and bring them off from their vicious habits, as it would be to draw the saints in light from their adherence to virtue and goodness.

Minister. Your reasoning would be conclusive upon the supposition that *there are two eternal principles*, viz. *good and evil*: if it can be proved, that evil is coexistent with goodness---that it hath always been---then the absolute eternity of sin and misery may be easily inferred. This is the true foundation of *endless misery*, and it came from the pagan theology: the heathens believed in *two eternal principles*, ever warring against each other, and neither fully prevailing; that men had the liberty of enlisting under which they pleased; and that those who in life chose virtue, should enjoy endless felicity; while those who chose and adhered to vice should eternally remain under its dominion, and of consequence be always miserable. Thus, the infernal dieties being judged by the poor pagans to be as eternal as the good gods, and more powerful, they sacrificed more to the evil principle than to the good, out of fear, and to appease the anger of those abhorred malevolent agents; hence the frequency of human sacrifices.

Now, when the Christian religion triumphed over paganism in the Roman empire, many of the philosophers embraced and professed it, but withal retained many of their pagan notions, among which was the *eternity* of these two opposite principles: hence arose the ancient sect of the Manichees, who believed not only the eternal existence of two contrary eternal gods, one good and the other evil; but also, that all visible things

things were created by the devil; and upon this principle, they might argue the universality of damnation with as much ease and certainty, as we, upon the contrary, may argue the certainty of the Universal Restoration, according to that glorious promise of God, Isaiah, lvii. 16---19. 'For I will not contend for ever, 'neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should 'fail before me, and the souls which I have made. 'For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, 'and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth; and he 'went on frowardly, in the way of his heart. I have 'seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him 'also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips, Peace, peace, to 'him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith JEHOVAH; and I will heal him.'

Those who venture to contradict their Maker, and say, that *he will contend for ever, and be always wroth*, ought to give as good a reason, at least, why he *will*, as he hath given why he *will not*; and, consequently, must prove him not to be the Father of all spirits, and the Creator of all souls: if, therefore, it can be demonstrated that Satan is an eternal *, self-existent, immutable,

* A person lately called on me, apparently to dispute against the doctrine of the Restoration. According to his own account, he had attended the gospel at different places for several years, and having heard of the Universal Doctrine, he thought it was his duty to oppose it, because it was a damnable heresy. In the course of conversation, I said it was a great absurdity to suppose that sin would endlessly exist, unless it could be proved that it had its root and foundation in God, or that there were two self-existent and eternal beings, the one good, the other evil. He replied, that there were two such namely, God and the devil. I thought at first that he jested; but he seriously affirmed it again; and added, that the devil was *omnipotent* and *infinite* and *eternal*, and that the Scriptures said so. I asked for his proof—He paused, and said, he was sure that the Scriptures did say so, and he had always believed it, and thought it strange that I should doubt it: he even intimated, that it was in vain to converse with me, as I denied the Scripture. In vain did I reason and quote Scripture—I could not move him. As I laid under the reproach of heresy concerning the Restoration, my word

mutable evil being, and that he hath created all or a part of mankind, (as ſome aſſerted formerly, and as I myſelf have heard lately) or that he hath drawn ſome of God's creatures into ſuch an union with himſelf, that they cannot be ſeparated from him; and that he will maintain his crown, throne, and kingdom, in oppoſition to God, to all endleſs duration; then, and not till then, may the *eternity* of ſin and miſery be concluded, from the nature of things, with equal eaſe and certainty, as the perfection and happineſs of the ſaints.

But, if the kingdom of evil, and all the works of ſin, Satan, and darkneſs, ſhall be totally deſtroyed by Chriſt, and all things ſhall be reheaded in him, who is the head of all principality and power, as well as of every man---(ſee Epheſ. i. 10. Col. ii. 10. 1 Cor. 11. 3.) ---if every knee ſhall bow, and tongue ſhall ſwear, and all things, whether in heaven or in earth, or under the earth, ſhall confeſs that he is Lord---and all things, whether in heaven or in earth, ſhall be reconciled to him---(ſee Iſaiah, xlv. 23. Phil. ii. 10. Col. i. 20.)---and all kingdoms (not excepting that of the prince of the power of the air) ſhall be broken and deſtroyed by the kingdom of Chriſt, which ſhall itſelf be yielded up into the kingdom of boundleſs love, where *judgment* ſhall be no more---what ſhall we ſay of that doctrine, that teaches us the *endleſs duration of evil?* So far is the *endleſs ſin* and miſery of the wicked from being inferred from the *endleſs* holineſs and felicity of the righteous, in the kingdom of the Father, that every proof and demonſtration of the latter, concludes equally againſt the former.

One of the firſt arguments that ever began to take hold of my mind, and to bring me to think ſeriouſly of the ſyſtem of the Reſtoration, was what I read in

word had no authority with him, not even againſt *the deity of the devil.* I underſtood him to be a Calviniſt, and adviſed him to converſe with ſome miniſter upon the ſubject and call upon me again, but I have not ſeen him ſince. However, I can but think that this man took the only ground upon which the opinion of endleſs miſery can be maintained.

a little

a little book upon the ſubject, called *The Everlaſting Goſpel*, &c. and is there thus expreſſed---

'It is as impoſſible that there ſhould be two endleſs 'contrary things, as that there ſhould be two real con- 'trary deities, a good god and a bad one, or two ſorts 'of contrary creatures, both of truly divine original, 'ſome being made good by God, and others bad. For 'an abſolute and merely infinite duration, which has 'neither beginning nor end, is, according to the con- 'feſſion of all divines, yea, of every reaſonable man, 'a property peculiar to the uncreated Being only. 'But ſuch an infinite duration, which, although it has 'a beginning, yet ſhall have no end, can only be the 'property of thoſe creatures that are of divine origi- 'nal. For as theſe, according to the language of the 'Scripture, are of divine origin, and therefore are 'rooted in God, or in his almighty creating power, 'which has no beginning, they can alſo be everlaſting '---their exiſtence or duration can alſo be without end 'in God. But whatſoever has not its eternal root in 'God, or in his eternal creating power, but is ſprung 'up in the creature in this world, by its voluntary 'turning away from God, and againſt his holy will, 'and conſequently is an abomination and diſpleaſure 'to the Moſt High, and is only ſuffered by him, ſuch 'as ſin, and the puniſhment depending thereon, theſe 'things cannot poſſibly be of an abſolute endleſs exiſt- 'ence and duration, or remain ſo long as God ſhall 'exiſt, but muſt of neceſſity once ceaſe and be anni- 'hilated. For as God is a Being to thoſe creatures 'which he created good, and which exiſt through his 'will, wherein they may ſubſiſt and be preſerved with- 'out end, ſo he is on the contrary, to iniquity and ſin, '(which, againſt his will, is ſprung up in and ſticks to 'the creatures) a conſuming fire, whereby all ſin and 'perverſeneſs in the creatures muſt be at laſt conſumed, 'annihilated, and ſeparated from them in the higheſt 'degree, in order to reſtore them to their primitive 'purity, in the ſame manner as the fire does not con- 'ſume and deſtroy the gold, but only the droſs, and 'that which is impure.'

We

We will now ſtate ſome of the arguments in favour of the *endleſs* continuance of the happineſs of the ſaints in the kingdom of their Father; and thoſe which prove that the ſtate of miſery ſhall come to an end.

Chriſt hath promiſed that the happineſs of the ſaints ſhall have no end, becauſe *his life* ſhall have no end, and he is *their life*.

The miſery of the wicked ſhall end, becauſe the kingdom of evil ſhall end.

The power of God ſtands engaged to preſerve and keep thoſe who commit themſelves to him; and thus their union with him ſhall always continue.

The ſame is engaged to deſtroy that covenant with death, and that agreement with hell, whereby ſinners are held in ſubjection to Satan, and thus to take the prey from the mighty, and the captives from the terrible.

The ſubjects of Chriſt are his natural ſubjects; he is their rightful ſovereign; but Satan's ſubjects are ſlaves, led captive by him at his will; he is an uſurper, and all that are in bondage to him belong to Chriſt, who will finally draw them all to himſelf.

Thoſe that are in bliſs ſhall be eternally attracted by him, and ſhall always chooſe that which is good; but when evil is broken, its influence ſhall no more prevail over thoſe that are captivated by it; and they ſhall feel the conſequences of ſin in ſuch a manner as to loathe it; and they ſhall heartily return, and ſwear allegiance to their rightful king.

There ſhall be no influence to draw the ſaints in bliſs from Chriſt, and thereby diſſolve his kingdom; but all the influence of God and goodneſs ſhall tend to diſſolve the kingdom of darkneſs, and to put an end to the thraldom and miſery of its unhappy ſlaves.

Thus I might go on with a long train of arguments upon this ſubject, but theſe may ſuffice.

Friend. Your arguments would ſeem very concluſive for the entire ſubjection of all things, if you could prove that the word *all* intends literally and mathematically *the whole*, without *exception*; but this, I

doubt, will be difficult for you to do, as you must know, that it is very frequently used in common language for *a part*, and sometimes for *only a small part of mankind*.

Minister. I acknowledge this is the case in common conversation, and in such parts of the sacred history where we are in no danger of being misled by it, being well informed by the context, or some other passages, or from the nature, or from the circumstances of the facts, that we must take it in a limited sense; but I do not recollect any passage, *where any point of doctrine* is spoken of, in which the word ALL is used in that *uncertain* and *indeterminate* manner: and it is necessary that it should not be used in that way *in matters of importance*, because we might be led into confusion and great uncertainty thereby, not knowing whether to understand it *universally* or *partially*. Wherefore I lay down this plain rule, *viz.* When the word ALL is used in any passage of Scripture, and we are not necessarily obliged, either by the context, or some other text, or the nature and circumstances of the case, to understand it *partially*; and especially where any important point of doctrine is spoken of, we are always to understand it *universally*, *without exception*.

Friend. But can you prove from the writings of the apostles, that they used the word ALL in this large and universal sense?

Minister. Yes, my friend, very easily, and in the most unexceptionable manner. Hear what the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says upon this matter: 'Thou hast put ALL *things* in subjection under his 'feet; for in that he put ALL in subjection under 'him, he left *nothing that was not put under him*.' Heb. ii. 8.

It is evident that the apostle's reasoning would be very inaccurate, if not entirely false, upon the supposition that ALL *things* did not intend ALL in the largest sense: for how would this conclusion naturally and necessarily follow, 'For in that he put ALL in subjection 'under him, he left *nothing* not put under him,' unless it

it be premiſed, that ALL is uſed in the *univerſal* ſenſe of the word?

Friend. But hath not the ſame apoſtle made an exception, when he uſes the word ALL, in ſome other of his writings?

Minister. Yes, truly; but it is ſuch an exception as juſtifies this ſenſe of the word more than a thouſand arguments: 'For he hath put ALL *things* under his 'feet; but when he ſaith, ALL *things* are put under 'him, it is manifeſt, that *he is excepted which did put* ALL '*things under him.*' 1 Cor. xv. 27. Here God the Father being alone excepted, proves all other beings to be included in the words ALL *things*; and that in ſo convincing a manner, that I am aſtoniſhed that I did not perceive it long before I did.

Friend. It is true, that nothing can be plainer than that ALL *things*, in theſe places, muſt mean ALL beings except God; but then, perhaps St. Paul only meant, that they ſhould be ſubject *to his controul*, and not brought *willingly to obey:* if you can prove this point as clearly as you have the other, and from the ſame authority, it will ſeem to put the matter with me beyond diſpute.

Minister. This is very eaſily done; for it is univerſally acknowledged by all Chriſtians, that all things are now, and have ever been, ſubject to his controul; for when he was upon earth, in his loweſt ſtate of humiliation, even the unclean ſpirits, the moſt rebellious of beings, obeyed his word, which made thoſe who ſaw his miracles cry with amazement, 'What thing is 'this? what new doctrine is this? For with authority 'commandeth he even the unclean ſpirits, and they 'obey him.' St. Mark, i. 27. The devils obeyed him univerſally, in whatever he commanded them; and could not enter the ſwine without his permiſſion; and how diſagreeable ſoever his words were to them, they were *forced* to comply, without daring to complain; yea, they frequently ſeemed like humble ſuppliants; and once, we read, they went ſo far as to adjure our bleſſed Lord not to torment them: ſee St. Mark,

v. 7. The winds, waves, fishes, all obeyed him; all diseases, and even death itself, heard his voice, and departed at his bidding; and to his disciples he said, 'All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.' Mat. xxviii. 18. And certainly now he is at 'the right 'hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers 'are made subject unto him.' 1 Pet. iii. 22. 'God 'hath exalted him far above all principality, and pow-'er, and might, and dominion, and every name that 'is named; not only in this *age*, (for so I render the 'word αιων, *aioni*) but also in that which is to come; 'and put all things under his feet, and gave him to be 'the head over all things to the church.' Ephes. i. 21, 22, But, as though the apostle had known that the sense would be disputed, he hath said, 'But now 'we see *not yet all things put under him*.' Heb. ii. 8. All things were subject to his controul, *even on earth*; and they cannot be less so, now he is exalted to heaven, to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was; and yet, many years after his ascension, the apostle says, 'But now we see not *yet* all things 'put under him;' by which he must certainly mean their being *willingly subject* unto him; for, in all other senses, all things are *now* put under him, in the most unlimited manner, as we have seen already. But the apostle goes on to tell how far the important work is accomplished, and that a sure foundation is laid for its entire completion; saying,--- 'But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than 'the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with 'glory and honour, that he, by the grace of God, 'should taste death for ALL;' for so the word παντος, *pantos*, ought to be rendered. There was anciently a manuscript in use, in which the words were χωρις Θεου, *choris Theou*, instead of χαριτι Θεου, *chariti Theou*, that is, *for all*, EXCEPT GOD*. And there is little doubt of its

* Mr. Winchester has been charged with changing the reading of the text in this passage without any authority. Perhaps Mr. W. might

its being the true sense; because St. Paul makes the same exception, with respect to those who are put under Christ, as we have before noted, 1 Cor. xv. 27,

Then the apostle adds, 'For it became him, for 'whom are *all things*, and by whom are *all things*, in 'bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain 'of their salvation perfect through sufferings.' Heb. ii. 9, 10.

Instead of the word *all* intending only *a part*, we find, in several places, that the word *many* intends *all*, as in Rom. v. 15, 16, 19. 'For if through the offence 'of one *many* be dead, much more the grace of God, 'and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus 'Christ, hath abounded unto *many*. The free gift is 'of *many* offences unto justification. For as by one 'man's disobedience *many* were made sinners, so, by

might not think it necessary to quote that which must have been well known to every man of learning: but, however, as authority has been loudly called for, let the following be taken.—

1. The reading χωρις Θεου, *choris Theou, God excepted*, is found in St. Ambrose in his *De Fide ad Gratianum*, lib. ii. cap 4. He expounds it as follows—'Christ tasted death for all *excepting God*, 'which is as much as to say, 'Christ died for all rational intelli-"gences—even for angels—only not for God—God I except." Ambrose flourished about the year 370.

2. Origen, whose learning no man ever doubted, says, 'This 'man (meaning Christ) is the great high-priest, not only for men, 'but for all—whatever is intellectual—offering himself a victim 'once sacrificed. For he tasted death for all, *excepting God*, or (as 'some copies have it) by the *grace of God*. Whether he tasted 'death for all, God excepted, he died not only for man, but for 'all intellectual beings; or whether he tasted death for all by the 'grace of God, he died for all excepting God, because it was by 'the grace of God, that he tasted death for all.' Origen on St. John's Gospel.

This learned Father was catechist at Alexandria in the year 223; and, by his saying that *certain copies* read *by the grace of God*, it seems reasonable to conclude that *most copies* in his time read *God excepted*.

3. The Syriac Testament, both the Paris edition and that of Tremellius read, 'He tasted death for all, *God excepted*.' Those who require further information may consult Bengelius's Various Readings.

'the obedience of one, shall *many* be made righteous.' ---Isaiah, liii. 11, 12. 'By his knowledge shall my 'righteous servant justify *many*, (or *the* many) for he 'shall bear their iniquities. And he bare the sins of '*many*, and made intercession for the transgressors.' These *many* are called *all*, in the 6th verse: '*All* we, 'like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every 'one to his own way; and JEHOVAH hath laid on him 'the iniquity of us *all*.'

But to return to our subject: St. Paul assures us, that 'though *all things*, without exception, are put under 'him, in *one* sense; yet, in *another*, he says, 'But now 'we see not yet *all things* put under him.' But he leaves us not in the dark about the matter; but speaks of that effectual 'working, whereby he is able even 'to subdue *all things* unto himself.' Phil. iii. 21. 'And 'when *all things* shall be *subdued* unto himself, then 'shall the son also himself be subject unto him that put '*all things* under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL.' 1 Cor. xv. 28. Here we plainly find a very necessary distinction between all things being *put under him*, and all things being *subdued unto him*; the former is already done in the fullest manner; and the latter *shall* be as perfectly and as fully accomplished in due time: 'Be-'cause the creation itself shall be delivered from the 'bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of 'the children of God. For we know, that the whole 'creation groaneth and travelleth in pain together un-'til now.' Rom. viii. 21, 22.

Though what hath already been spoken, may seem more than enough to prove the point respecting the word *all*, yet there is one passage more, full to the purpose, that I would not omit; it being of itself fully sufficient to settle the dispute for ever. The apostle, speaking of Christ, saith, 'Who is the image of the 'the invisible God, the first-born of *every creature*; for 'by him were *all things* created that are in heaven, and 'that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they 'be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; '*all things* were created by him, and for him; and he

'is

'is before *all things*, and by him *all things* conſiſt. And 'he is the head of the body, the church; who is the 'beginning, the firſt-born from the dead; that in *all* '*things* he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleaſed 'the Father that in him ſhould *all* fulneſs dwell; and 'having made peace through the blood of his croſs, 'by him to reconcile *all things* unto himſelf; by him, 'I ſay, whether they be things in earth, or things in 'heaven.' Col. 1. 15---20.

As the word *all* is generally acknowledged to be uſed in its moſt extenſive ſenſe in every place of this paragraph, except the laſt, there is no reaſon to be given why the apoſtle ſhould change the ſenſe of the word, without giving us the leaſt notice of it; and indeed it would be very unkind, if not unfair, for him thus to do; as it would tend to miſlead us, in a matter of very great importance.

Friend. I hope that I am not ſo attached to my own opinions as to be unwilling to hear and conſider what may be advanced againſt them; but the doctrine of *endleſs damnation* has been ſo generally conſidered as a moſt important article of faith by all denominations, that I can by no means think of giving it up, unleſs you are able to eſtabliſh the contrary ſyſtem upon the moſt ſolid ground, and anſwer all the ſcriptural objections fairly, that have been, or that can be brought againſt it; for I muſt have all my doubts ſolved before I can think of believing ſuch a ſtrange doctrine as this appears to me.

Minister. I moſt heartily commend your prudence and ſincerity: *I* took the ſame reſolution, and would never receive this view till I could anſwer all objections to my own ſatisfaction: and if you are diſpoſed to enquire farther at another opportunity, I ſhall be happy in giving you all the aſſiſtance in my power.

END OF THE FIRST DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE II.

Friend. GOOD day to you, ſir. I was juſt paſſing by, and if you have a little time to ſpare, I ſhould be happy to have ſome farther diſcourſe with you reſpecting your ſentiments; for, although I cannot fall in with your views, yet I am convinced that your mind is upright in the matter, and that you do not diſagree with your brethren for the ſake of differing, but for what you believe to be the truth.

Minister. I have this to ſay, (and I can with truth declare it) that I never ſhould have diſſented from my brethren, had they only given me the liberty of enjoying that natural right of freely thinking for myſelf in matters of religion. I ſincerely wiſh to live and die in unity with all that love God and keep his commandments; and I ſhould never have troubled the world with my ſentiments, had not great pains been taken to repreſent me as a heretic, and my ſentiments dangerous to mankind: this was done to prevent people from hearing what I had to ſay in other matters. I was therefore, in a ſort, compelled to ſit down and anſwer all the objections that were brought againſt the truth I believed; which anſwers, drawn (as I truſt) fairly from the Scriptures, have ſatisfied many who have read what I then wrote upon the ſubject.

Friend. I never ſaw your anſwers to objections in print; but in our laſt converſation, you gave ſuch anſwers to many queſtions, as ſeemed to convince me that much more might be ſaid in favour of the general Reſtoration than I formerly imagined: but I have a number of objections remaining, which appear to me unanſwerable, and which I beg leave to ſtate to you in the plaineſt manner.

Minister. Do, my dear friend; you will give me pleaſure by being free and open upon this ſubject; propoſe

poſe all your objections, in the ſtrongeſt manner poſſible, and I will give you ſuch anſwers as have ſatisfied me in the matter; and I beg leave to aſſure you, that no light, trifling, or forced anſwer, far leſs a manifeſt evaſion, would ſatisfy my mind upon this awful and intereſting ſubject; and if what I believe is not capable of a ſcriptural defence, I ſhall endeavour to quit the ground as ſpeedily as poſſible.

Friend. The words of our Saviour, recorded by St. Mark, chap. ix. 43---49. form a very ſerious, and, to me, an unanſwerable objection againſt the Univerſal Reſtoration.---

'And if thy hand offend thee, (*or* cauſe thee to 'offend) cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into 'life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell; 'into the fire that never ſhall be quenched (*or* that is 'unquenchable); where their worm dieth not, and 'the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend 'thee, (*or* cauſe thee to offend) cut it off: it is better 'for thee to enter halt into life, than, having two feet, 'to be caſt into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be 'quenched (*or* that is unquenchable); where their 'worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And 'if thine eye offend thee, (*or* cauſe thee to offend) 'pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the 'kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two 'eyes, to be caſt into hell fire; where their worm dieth 'not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one 'ſhall be ſalted with fire, and every ſacrifice ſhall be 'ſalted with ſalt.'

Here our Lord repeats five times, that 'the fire is 'not, or never ſhall be quenched, or is unquenchable;' words of nearly ſimilar meaning; three times he ſpeaks of hell as a *place* where 'their worm dieth not;' and, to ſhew the perpetuity of the ſufferings of the miſerable, he ſays, 'For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire,' *i. e.* preſerved by the fire, as ſalt preſerves meat. Theſe are the objections from this paſſage, briefly ſtated---Are you able to anſwer them fairly, without any evaſion, from the authority of Scripture?

Miniſter.

Minister. This is certainly a moſt terrible paſſage, and deſerves to be conſidered particularly.

There is no doubt but Jeſus Chriſt had his eye upon that paſſage in Iſaiah, lxvi. 24. 'And they ſhall go 'forth, and look upon the carcaſſes of the men that 'have tranſgreſſed againſt me; for their worm ſhall 'not die, neither ſhall their fire be quenched: and they 'ſhall be an abhorring unto all fleſh.'

It will be of uſe to us to underſtand when this prophecy ſhall be fulfilled: it ſhall be when the children of Iſrael ſhall return and be ſettled in their own land; and their enemies ſhall come againſt them, and ſhall be deſtroyed, and their carcaſſes ſhall fall upon the mountains of Iſrael, and ſhall be a prey to the fowls of heaven, and their fleſh ſhall be devoured by worms, which ſhall not die, till they have eaten and entirely deſtroyed their bodies.

'Thou ſhalt fall upon the mountains of Iſrael, thou 'and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee; 'I will give thee to the ravenous birds of every ſort, 'and to the beaſts of the field, to be devoured. Thou 'ſhalt fall upon the open field; for I have ſpoken it, 'ſaith Adonai Jehovah. And it ſhall come to paſs in 'that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of 'graves in Iſrael, the valley of the paſſengers on the 'eaſt of the ſea: and it ſhall ſtop the noſes of the paſ'ſengers; and there ſhall they bury Gog and all his 'multitude; and they ſhall call it, The Valley of Ham'mon-Gog. And ſeven months ſhall the houſe of Iſrael 'be burying of them, that they may cleanſe the land.' (See Ezek. xxxix. 4, 5, 11, 12.) 'And it ſhall come to 'paſs, that every one that is left of all the nations 'which came againſt Jeruſalem, ſhall even go up from 'year to year, to worſhip the King, Jehovah of Hoſts, 'and to keep the feaſt of tabernacles.' Zech. xiv. 16. 'And it ſhall come to paſs, that from one new moon 'to another, and from one ſabbath to another, ſhall all 'fleſh come to worſhip before me, ſaith Jehovah.' Iſaiah, lxvi. 21. And they that ſhall come up to Jeruſalem to worſhip the Lord, during the time that theſe bodies

bodies ſhall lie in the open field, ſhall go forth and behold them in a ſtate of putrefaction, a prey to worms; and all the nations of the earth ſhall ſee God's judgments executed upon thoſe who dare to rebel againſt him, by making war againſt the lamb, and againſt his army. Rev. xvii. 14. xix. 19.

It is alſo intimated by Ezekiel, that a fire ſhall be kindled to burn their weapons of war, &c. which ſhall laſt for ſome time. Hear his words:---'And they that 'dwell in the cities of Iſrael ſhall go forth, and ſhall 'ſet on fire and burn the weapons, both the ſhields 'and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the 'hand-ſtaves and the ſpears; and they ſhall burn them 'with fire ſeven years: ſo that they ſhall take no wood 'out of the field, neither cut down any out of the fo-'reſts; for they ſhall burn the weapons with fire.' See Ezek. xxxix. 9,10.

Thus have I endeavoured to give the plain ſenſe of the text to which our Lord alluded; and I have not the ſmalleſt doubt of its being hereafter literally fulfilled.

I will now endeavour to give what appears to me the meaning of the text before us:---Chriſt threatened that thoſe who would not deny themſelves, and cut off thoſe things that led them into ſin, ſhould hereafter ſuffer infinitely greater inconveniencies, by being caſt into hell fire. And oh! who can conceive how dreadful a portion is threatened to ſome tranſgreſſors! that they 'ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which 'is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his 'indignation; and ſhall be tormented with fire and 'brimſtone, in the preſence of the holy angels and in 'the preſence of the Lamb: and the ſmoke of their 'torment aſcendeth up to the age of ages*; and they 'have no reſt day nor night,' Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

Thus,

* Εις αιωνα αιωνων, *eis aiona aionion*. See note p. 13. where the proper ſenſe of this phraſe is given. Let us now enquire what that aionion aion, or age of ages is, *to* which the puniſhment of ſome of

Thus, as the enemies of God, who shall be destroyed near Jerusalem, shall have their carcasses exposed full of worms, and be an abhorring unto all that behold

of the wicked will continue; I say *some* of the wicked, for it is evident that *only* some of them are threatened with such punishment: see Rev. xiv. 11. Indeed there seems to be a great variety of degrees of future punishment, according to the moral characters of men. This is perfectly consistent with the ideas which we have of distributive justice in the Deity, and is supported by the declarations of our Lord, who teaches us that there will be *few* stripes and *many*; and that it will be more tolerable for some sinners in the day of judgment than for others.

The degrees of punishment mentioned in Scripture are,

1. Shame.

2. Loss of the kingdom.

3. Punishment of sense; and this of various degrees, as before observed; but the greatest of all is to endure εις αιωνα αιωνιον, *eis aiona aionion*, to the age of ages.

1. Whatever period this may be, the punishment is to continue *to* that age, not *during* it. That the Greek preposition εις, *eis*, is often taken in that sense, see Mat. xv. 24. 'I am not sent but *to* the lost 'sheep of the house of Israel.' John, xi. 31. 'She goeth *to* the 'grave to weep there.' John, xiii. 1. 'He loved them *unto* the 'end.'

2. The *age of ages* in the New Testament has clearly a reference to the jubilee in the Old Testament; and what this is in the type, that is in reality. The jubilee contained in it all the other typical periods, as the weekly sabbath—the yearly sabbaths, or solemn returns of the sacred feasts—and the sabbath of years: so the age of ages contains all the other periods, dispensations, and ages that have been or shall be And as the jubilee gave universal liberty to all who were in servitude—exonerated every obligation from those who were in debt—and returned every man to his inheritance: the commencement of the age of ages will give spiritual liberty to every captive who is confined in the prison-house—relieve every one who is burthened with guilt—and restore every one to the enjoyment of the Divine favour, which is the proper inheritance of every rational creature.

3. If I might be indulged with a further reflection upon this grand subject, I should think it probable that the duration of the age of ages (in which there shall be neither sin, sorrow, crying, nor death of any kind) will at least be equal to all the periods and ages of guilt, pain, and death put together.

My reasons for thinking that this great age will be thus long in its duration, are,

First,

hold them, so those who are cast into the burning lake shall be publicly exposed to shame, and shall suffer openly for their crimes; and the smoke of their torment shall ascend up *continually*, during those ages that the lake of fire, or the second death, shall continue.

But when I consider, that this terraqueous globe itself is probably to become the lake of fire, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and yet, after that dreadful scene is past, the earth itself shall be renewed, and become the habitation of righteousness, I can hardly have any doubts, but all the rational part of the creation, 'shall be delivered from the bondage of cor-'ruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of 'God.' See Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21, 22.

Thus, if the lake of fire, or second death itself, shall be destroyed, shall cease and be no more, there is an *end* to *tormenting pain*; though, perhaps, such *inward reflections*, shall continue for some time longer, (if not to eternity) which, though they shall tend exceedingly to increase the love of God in the souls thus delivered, shall fill them with shame, similar, or perhaps more pungent than we feel here on earth, when we are melted under a deep sense of our manifold transgressions, and of the pardoning love of God at the same time. This seems to be the meaning of such passages as these:---

'O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stub-'ble before the wind. As the fire burneth the wood,

First, That the glory of Christ demands it. To me it seems proper the redeemer of his creatures should reign as long over the creation in righteousness, peace, love, and joy, as sin hath reigned in guilt, pain, and death.

Secondly, Such a long and glorious period of universal love and order under Christ, will give the fullest possible proof to all created intelligences of the compleatness of his work, in having reconciled all things to the Father; and will be a proper prelude to his giving up his delegated kingdom: and will demonstrate that *of* God, *by* him, and *to* him, are all things, by Christ Jesus.

But in this thought I have no controversy with any man; I only express my own private sentiment, I hope with humility.

'and as the fleme ſetteth the mountains on fire, ſo 'perſecute them with thy tempeſt, and make them 'afraid with thy ſtorm. Fill their faces with ſhame, 'that they may 'ſeek thy name, O JEHOVAH. Let them 'be confounded and troubled for ever, yea, let them 'be put to ſhame and periſh; that''---(our tranſlators have added the word *men**---but the ſenſe determines that the addition ſhould be)---'*they* may know that 'thou whoſe name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Moſt 'High over all the earth.' Pſalm lxxxiii. 13---18.

'The wiſe ſhall inherit glory, but ſhame ſhall be the 'promotion of fools.' Prov. iii. 35.

'They ſhall be greatly aſhamed, for they ſhall not 'proſper; their everlaſting confuſion ſhall never be 'forgotten.' Jer. xx. 11. xxiii. 40.

'They ſhall be aſhamed, and alſo confounded, all 'of them: they ſhall go to confuſion together, that are 'makers of idols.' Iſaiah, xlv. 16. 'And all that are 'incenſed againſt him (JEHOVAH) ſhall be aſhamed.' Verſe 24.

'For thus ſaith Adonai JEHOVAH, I will even deal 'with thee as thou haſt done, which haſt deſpiſed the 'oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheleſs I will 'remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy 'youth, and I will eſtabliſh unto thee an everlaſting 'covenant. Then thou ſhalt remember thy ways, and 'be aſhamed, when thou ſhalt receive thy ſiſters, thine

* Pſalm lxxxiii. 18. 'That *men* may know,' &c. A critical reader may obſerve, that this text needs no ſupplement: thus it reads:---

וידעו כי אתה שמך יהוה לבדך עליון על כל הארץ׃

'Et cognoſcant quod tu nomen tuum Domine ſolus tu altiſſimus 'ſuper omnem terram.' MONTANUS.

'And they ſhall know that thou, whoſe name is JEHOVAH, art 'the Moſt High over all the earth.'

I do not charge our tranſlators with wilful error; but it is likely that they could not underſtand how ſinners could be brought to the knowledge of JEHOVAH after they had been confounded and troubled for ever, or to the age, and had been put to ſhame and periſhed; and therefore they might even think that there was an error in the original.

'elder

'elder and thy younger (*viz.* Samaria and Sodom); 'and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not 'by thy covenant. And I will eſtabliſh my covenant 'with thee, and thou ſhalt know that I am JEHOVAH; 'that thou mayeſt remember, and be confounded, and 'never open thy mouth any more, becauſe of thy 'ſhame, when I am pacified towards thee, for all that 'thou haſt done, ſaith Adonai JEHOVAH.' Ezek. xvi. 59---63.

'Then ſhall ye remember your own evil ways, and 'your doings that were not good, and ſhall loathe 'yourſelves in your own ſight, for your iniquities, and 'for your abominations. Not for your ſakes do 'I this, ſaith Adonai JEHOVAH, be it known unto you; 'be aſhamed and confounded, O houſe of Iſrael.'--- Ezek. xxxvi. 31, 32.

But the lake of fire ſhall go out, when all the purpoſes for which it ſhall be kindled are accompliſhed; and if ſo, then it follows of courſe, that intelligences ſhall be no longer tormented therein.

FRIEND. But when God ſays, that a fire ſhall not be quenched, does it not neceſſarily imply, that it ſhall never ceaſe burning?

MINISTER. By no means; for we read in ſeveral places of Scripture of fires that have ceaſed ages ago, that were ſpoken of in as ſtrong terms as are uſed by Chriſt reſpecting the fire of hell.

As for inſtance; in Lev. vi. 13. we read, 'The fire 'ſhall ever be burning upon the altar; it ſhall *never* go 'out.' This is a much ſtronger expreſſion than if it had been ſaid, 'It ſhall not be quenched;' for it is ſaid, '*It ſhall never go out:*' but ſurely, it muſt be uſed with ſome limitation; for we know that it hath ceaſed ages ago: and we read that Daniel propheſied of the Meſſiah, that he ſhould 'cauſe the ſacrifice and obla-'tion to ceaſe,' Dan. ix. 27.; but it would certainly have been a weak argument againſt Daniel's prophecy, that, as Moſes had ſaid, The fire ſhould never go out upon the altar, therefore the Meſſiah could never cauſe the ſacrifice and oblation to ceaſe; but it would be juſt

as good an argument againſt Daniel's prophecy, as the words of Chriſt are againſt Iſaiah's:---'For I will not 'contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for 'the ſpirit ſhould fail before me, and the ſouls which I 'have made.' 'I have ſworn by myſelf, the word is 'gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not 'return, That unto me every knee ſhall bow, every 'tongue ſhall ſwear, ſurely ſhall ſay, In JEHOVAH have 'I righteouſneſs and ſtrength; to him ſhall come; and 'all that are incenſed againſt him ſhall be aſhamed.' Iſaiah, lvii. 16. xlv. 23, 24.

In Jer. xvii. 27. we read, 'But if you will not 'hearken unto me, &c. then will I kindle a fire in the 'gates thereof, and it ſhall devour the palaces of Jeru-'ſalem, and *it ſhall not be quenched.*' See alſo chap. iv. 4. xxi. 12. Amos, v. 6. 2 Kings, xxii. 17.

Similar threatenings we find poſitively pronounced by Ezekiel at the command of God:---'Moreover the 'word of JEHOVAH came unto me ſaying, Son of 'man, ſet thy face towards the ſouth, and drop thy 'words towards the ſouth, and prophecy againſt the 'foreſt of the ſouth field; and ſay to the foreſt of 'the ſouth, Hear the word of JEHOVAH; thus ſaith 'Adonai JEHOVAH, Behold I will kindle a fire in 'thee, and it ſhall devour every green tree in thee, 'and every dry tree: the flaming flame ſhall not be 'quenched; and all faces from the ſouth to the 'north ſhall be burnt therein; and all fleſh ſhall ſee 'that I JEHOVAH have kindled it; *it ſhall not be quench-'ed.*' Ezek. xx. 45---48. See alſo Jer. vii. 20.

Now theſe threatenings were ſurely executed; for the people did not hearken unto God: he did certainly kindle a fire, and it burnt, and was not quenched, but conſumed Jeruſalem and all her palaces; and the beautiful foreſts that were ſo much eſteemed, ſhared the ſame fate. But what perſon will argue, that the whole city and country muſt be now in flames, and muſt have been conſuming, from the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, becauſe of theſe expreſſions, 'The flaming flame 'ſhall not be quenched,' &c. ſince we know that Jeru-

ſalem,

ſalem, and the county round about, have been ſince inhabited, and will be again, in a more glorious manner than ever?

Neither will it help the matter to ſay, that we muſt underſtand the fire *figuratively* for the anger of God, &c. for he declares by Zechariah, after the ſeventy years captivity, that he was 'returned to Jeruſalem *with* 'mercies.' See Zech. i. 16. And though the preſent deſolation of that land is compared to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, Deut. xxix. 23---28.---and Ezekiel not only ſpeaks of it as deſolate and waſte, but as having been always ſo, though we know it was formerly filled with inhabitants---(ſee Ezek. xxxvi. 34, 35. xxxviii. 8.)---yet all the prophets ſpeak of a time to come, when it ſhall be much more flouriſhing than ever it hath been; and Iſaiah ſays, 'Whereas thou haſt been forſaken and 'hated, ſo that no man went through thee; I will 'make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many ge-'nerations. Thou ſhalt no more be termed forſaken, 'neither ſhall thy land be termed deſolate; but thou 'ſhalt be called Hephzibah (*my delight is in her*) and 'thy land Beulah (*married*); for JEHOVAH delighteth in 'thee, and thy land ſhall be married.' Iſaiah, lx. 15. lxii. 4.

Thus we may ſee by theſe and many other paſſages, that predictions, apparently directly contrary one to the other, may be all fulfilled upon the ſame land, people, and perſons, only allowing a proper time to each, without which we can never make ſenſe of many prophecies.

Iſaiah, ſpeaking of the land of Bozrah, ſays, 'And 'the ſtreams thereof ſhall be turned into pitch, and the 'duſt thereof into brimſtone; and the land thereof 'ſhall become burning pitch; it ſhall not be quenched 'night nor day: the ſmoke thereof ſhall go up for 'ever: from generation to generation it ſhall lie waſte; 'none ſhall paſs through it for ever and ever. But the 'cormorant and the bittern ſhall poſſeſs it; the owl 'alſo and the raven ſhall dwell in it'---(birds than cannot live in fire, pitch, and brimſtone any better than

men)---'And thorns shall come up in her palaces, 'nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it 'shall be an habitation for dragons, and a court for 'owls. The wild beasts of the desart shall also meet 'with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall 'cry to his fellow: the screech-owl also shall rest there, 'and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the 'great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch, and ga-'ther under her shadow: there shall the vultures also 'be gathered, every one with his mate. Seek ye out 'of the book of JEHOVAH, and read: no one of these 'shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it 'hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered 'them. And he hath cast the lot for them, and his 'hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall 'possess it for ever; from generation to generation shall 'they dwell therein.' Isaiah, xxxiv. 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Now in this passage there are such things spoken of as are impossible to be fulfilled at once, without as great a miracle as was wrought for the three children in the furnace; and which there is no reason to expect will be wrought in favour of cormorants, bitterns, owls, ravens, dragons, satyrs, wild beasts, thorns, nettles, and brambles. In the 10th verse we read of a period, called *for ever*, wherein this land is to be on fire, and is not to be quenched night nor day: and the smoke of it is to ascend up *for ever*; but in the 17th verse, it is said, that the before-mentioned birds and beasts shall possess it *for ever*, even from generation to generation shall they dwell therein. But one of these periods must end before the other can begin; the fire must cease to burn, and the smoke to ascend, before beasts can take up their constant dwelling there, and birds can lay and hatch, and gather their young ones under their shadow, and enjoy the society of their mates. And thus the whole prophecy may be fulfilled, not in the *same*, but in *different* periods: and thus also may all the threatenings and all the promises in the sacred book be accomplished, not at once, but each in their season.

It

It appears evident, that our Lord, by alluding to a fire that ſhall burn on earth, and to worms that ſhall devour the fleſh of the ſlain, could not mean to prove the torments of men to be abſolutely *endleſs*; at leaſt, the expreſſions of *the worm* that *dieth not*, and *the fire* that *is not quenched*, do not *neceſſarily* imply it; which has been ſufficiently proved by the paſſages where the ſame or ſimilar expreſſions are uſed, where yet the ſubject cannot intend *endleſs* duration; and this is all that can be neceſſary to prove at preſent.

As to the expreſſion of being *ſalted with fire*, as *every ſacrifice was ſalted with ſalt*; I am not ſo clear what might have been our Saviour's intent in this expreſſion; but I think, in the firſt place, he intended to teach us, that they ſhould not be *annihilated* by the fire, but *preſerved* therein, to be tormented day and night in the preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb, to the age of ages. I would alſo propoſe, whether our Lord did not mean to intimate, that even the fire itſelf ſhall be of uſe, under his direction, to humble, ſubdue and penetrate the ſtubborn and diſobedient rebels that ſhall be caſt into it. *Fire*, as well as *ſalt*, is a great purifier; and preſerves and cleanſes thoſe things which are able to endure it; and is the great agent by which all metals are ſeparated from their droſs, and prepared for the uſe for which they were deſigned. Under the law, all unclean things that could endure the fire, were ordered to be caſt into it, in order to their cleanſing.

Friend. What you have ſaid concerning the fires that are repreſented as unquenchable, in ſeveral paſſages of Scripture, is worthy of attention; but you ſhould conſider, that theſe fires were all on earth, and in time, and therefore muſt have an end, or ceaſe to burn; but the fire of hell is in eternity, and therefore muſt laſt as long as eternity ſhall endure. Pray, what can you ſay to this?

Miniſter. Had thoſe *unquenchable* fires never gone out while earth endured, or while time laſted, there might have been ſome force in this argument; but ſince

ſince the continuance of the fire does not depend upon the *ſeaſon* in which it is kindled, but upon the *combuſtibles* that feed and ſupport it, this can be no objection: therefore, ſince thoſe unquenchable fires that have been mentioned, were kindled on earth, and yet did not burn while earth laſted, but have gone out long ago, there is no neceſſity of granting, (even though we ſhould admit your premiſes of the fire of hell being kindled in eternity) that the unquenchable fire of the burning lake *muſt* unavoidably burn to *all eternity*, merely becauſe it is ſuppoſed to belong to that ſtate: but if puniſhments only belong to thoſe ages before Chriſt ſhall reſign the kingdom to the Father, and the lake of fire ſhall be this terraqueous globe, diſſolved or melted with fervent heat, then the ground is changed, and the whole objection vaniſhes of courſe.

Friend. As you have come over this objection better than I expected you could, I ſhall leave it for the preſent, and conſider more fully, when I am by myſelf, what you have ſaid upon this ſubject; and ſhall now propoſe the greateſt objection that can be brought againſt the Reſtoration of all men, from the Scriptures; and which, if you can fairly anſwer, I ſhall be almoſt perſuaded to believe with you; but I am perſuaded, that you will be hard put to it.

Minister. Produce your cauſe, and bring forth your ſtrong reaſons, that we may hear them; and if I am ſilenced, I will not be aſhamed to acknowledge it with all my heart.

Friend. I ſhall bring my objection from the Scriptures, and ſtate it with the utmoſt preciſion that I am able---It is the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, of which our Saviour ſpeaks in the moſt awful manner, ſaying, 'Wherefore I ſay unto you, all manner of ſin 'and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men; but the 'blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be for-'given unto men. And whoſoever ſpeaketh a word 'againſt the ſon of man, it ſhall (*or* may) be forgiven 'him; but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the Holy 'Ghoſt,

'Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this 'world (*or* age) neither in the world (*or* age) to come. 'Verily, I ſay unto you, all ſins ſhall (*or* may) be for-'given unto the ſons of men, and blaſphemies where-'with ſoever they ſhall blaſpheme; but he that ſhall 'blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt, hath never for-'giveneſs, (*or* hath not forgiveneſs to the age) but is 'in danger of eternal damnation.' St. Mat. xii. 31, 32. St. Mark, iii. 28, 29. This is ſuch a matter of importance, that three of the evangeliſts notice it. St. Luke hath it thus: 'And whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a word 'againſt the ſon of man, it ſhall (*or* may) be forgiven 'him; but unto him that blaſphemeth againſt the Holy 'Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven.' St. Luke, xii. 10. St. Matthew ſaith, this ſin ſhall not be forgiven in this world, nor in that to come---St. Mark, that ſuch an one hath never forgiveneſs, but is in danger of eternal damnation---and St. Luke poſitively ſaith, it ſhall not be forgiven: and to confirm the matter ſtill more, if poſſible, St. Paul ſaith, 'For it is impoſſible for thoſe 'who were once enlightened, and have taſted the hea-'venly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy 'Ghoſt, and having taſted the good word of God, and 'the powers of the world to come, if they ſhall fall 'away, (*or* and have fallen away) to renew them again 'to repentance; ſeeing they crucify to themſelves the 'ſon of God afreſh, and put him to an open ſhame. 'For if we ſin wilfully, after that we have received 'the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more 'ſacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of 'judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour 'the adverſaries. He that deſpiſed Moſes's law, died 'without mercy, by the mouth of two or three wit-'neſſes, of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, 'ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under 'foot the ſon of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy 'thing, and hath done deſpite unto the ſpirit of grace?' Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. x. 26---29. And the ſame apoſtle directs

directs us, saying, 'Looking diligently, lest any man 'fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness 'springing up trouble you, and thereby many be de-'filed; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, 'as Esau, who for one morsel of bread sold his birth-'right. For ye know how that afterwards, when he 'would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; 'for he found no place of repentance, though he 'sought it carefully with tears.' Heb. xii. 15, 16, 17.

And St. John, the beloved disciple, says, 'If any 'man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, 'he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that 'sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do 'not say that he shall pray for it.' 1 John, v. 16.

Now here is a sin for which there is no forgiveness, neither in this world (*or* age) or in that to come---which shall not be forgiven at all---he that committeth it hath never forgiveness, is in danger of eternal damnation---he cannot be renewed again to repentance, because he hath crucified Christ to himself afresh, and hath put him to an open shame: having sinned wilfully and maliciously, after receiving the knowledge of the truth, to such no more sacrifice for sins remaineth---judgment and fiery indignation are his certain portion---he is an adversary, and must be devoured---a sorer punishment than death without mercy awaits him, of which he is worthy, for that he hath trodden under foot the son of God, the only Saviour, and hath counted the precious blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, and which alone is able to cleanse from sin, an unholy thing; and hath done despite to the spirit of grace, which is only able to renew the heart, and therefore the case of such must be desparate; for if such an one, like Esau, should wish to repent, and gain what he had lost; it could not be, for he would find no place for repentance, though he might seek it carefully with tears; for having committed the sin unto death, for which no prayer is to be made, no intercession to be offered up, he is bound over to the second

ſecond death, the lake of fire and brimſtone, and muſt bear the puniſhment of his ſins for ever and ever!!!--- What ſay you to this?

Minister. As when Nebuchadnezzar told Daniel his dream, he was aſtoniſhed for one hour at the greatneſs of the puniſhment which he ſaw would inevitably come upon the king, much more muſt all thoſe be who read and conſider theſe dreadful threatenings, which muſt ſurely come upon all thoſe who have ſinned in the manner deſcribed! I ſhall make a few obſervations upon theſe moſt terrible paſſages of Scripture, partly to prevent feeble minds from falling into deſpair, that may ſee them collected in one ſtriking view, partly to cure proud minds of preſumption, and partly to ſhew that the doctrine of the Reſtoration may be defended, notwithſtanding.

1. We are ſure that the Scribes and Phariſees of our Saviour's time, who blaſphemouſly aſcribed his miracles to the power of the devil, did, in the moſt direct and undeniable manner, commit that ſin; and ſome are doubtful whether it can be committed by any in theſe days.

2. It is generally acknowledged, that the Hebrews were in danger of committing that ſin, by openly and wilfully apoſtatizing from Chriſtianity, and publicly renouncing Chriſt and his ſalvation, and blaſpheming againſt the Holy Ghoſt, after having been partakers of its extraordinary gifts.

3. It cannot be committed by ignorant perſons, nor without a conſiderable degree of malice prepenſe; light in the underſtanding and malice in the heart are neceſſary ingredients of this dreadful crime; and it appears to me, it muſt be committed openly, and that it cannot be committed in thought only.

4. Under the Levitical diſpenſation there were many unpardonable ſins---crimes that could not be forgiven or overlooked, and for which no atonement could be made, and which were puniſhed with death, without mercy; other crimes, unleſs ſacrifices were offered, and repentance took place, ſubjected the parties to death alſo; but, under the goſpel, there is but one crime

crime that is properly unpardonable, and that abſolutely ſubjects the perſon guilty of it to the ſecond death; yet many other ſins are threatened with the ſame puniſhment conditionally, but they may be forgiven, and not puniſhed at all; but this one muſt as certainly be puniſhed with the ſecond death, as murder, or any other crime, was by the law of Moſes puniſhed with the death of the body, without mercy or forgiveneſs. *Forgery* is the unpardonable ſin of England: people frequently ſuffer death for other crimes, as well as this; but other offences are ſometimes forgiven, but this never; it is always puniſhed with death. This circumſtance may illuſtrate my meaning. The ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt is an offence of that kind, that, either owing to its uncommon malignity, as is moſt likely, or ſome other cauſe, expoſes the guilty perſon to the age of judgment, from which he cannot eſcape by repentance, pardon, and ſprinkling of the blood of Chriſt, as other ſinners may; neither can he be at preſent born of the ſpirit, to which he hath done deſpite; nor can he be reclaimed by any poſſible means, in this age, or in the age that is to ſucceed this; but is inevitably bound over to ſuffer the inconceivable torments of the ſecond death, or lake of fire and brimſtone, after the day of judgment.

5. There is no kind of diſpute between us, reſpecting the certainty of the puniſhment of ſuch; in this we both agree: he that ſinneth againſt the Holy Ghoſt is in danger of eternal damnation, or judgment, or the ſecond death:---the queſtion is, Shall there ever come a time when the ſecond death, or lake of fire, ſhall no more exiſt? If this can be proved, the concluſion will be evident, *viz.* that not one ſhall remain under the power thereof to all eternity: upon this, and this alone, depends the ſolution of this awful, intereſting, and moſt important queſtion; and I conſider all other anſwers as mere quibbles, compared with this. And if it cannot be proved that a time will come when all that bears the name of death ſhall be deſtroyed, thoſe who commit the ſin unto death, muſt, at leaſt, be allowed

allowed to ſtand as exceptions to the general rule; and I am apt to think the rule itſelf will be overthrown. I ſhall therefore labour this point a little; and if I ſhould be ſo happy as to prove to your ſatisfaction the total deſtruction of death, it will anſwer many other objections as well as this. My only refuge is Scripture; if that fail me, I ſhall not preſume to purſue the ſubject farther.

Iſaiah, xxv. 8. 'He will ſwallow up *death* in victory; and Adonai JEHOVAH will wipe away tears from off all faces.' Hoſea, xiii. 14. 'I will ranſom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from *death*. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, (*or* hell) I will be thy deſtruction; repentance ſhall be hid from mine eyes.' 1 Cor. xv. 26. 'The laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed is *death*'—or rather, as the words may more properly be arranged—'*Death*, the laſt enemy, ſhall be deſtroyed.' The ſecond death is infinitely more the enemy of man, than the firſt, and may therefore be conſidered as an enemy which God will deſtroy. Now,

If the laſt enemy ſhall be deſtroyed, there will not be one left:

But the firſt is true; therefore alſo the laſt. As,

Would it not be highly abſurd to ſay, that, although the very laſt enemy ſhall be deſtroyed, yet many millions ſhall remain to all eternity?

Verſe 56. 'The ſting of *death* is ſin.' While ſin remains in exiſtence, death will be able to ſhew its ſting; but the time will come when death ſhall have no ſting to boaſt of; therefore ſin, and conſequently death of every kind, ſhall be deſtroyed. 1 John, iii. 8. 'For this purpoſe the ſon of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.' Unleſs Chriſt finally deſtroys the works of the devil, even all ſin out of the univerſe, his purpoſe muſt be eternally fruſtrated:

But the laſt can never be; therefore the firſt is true.

Heb. ii. 14. 'Foraſmuch, then, as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe

'took part of the ſame; that through death he might 'deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is the 'devil.' Now what death has the devil power over? the death of the body? or that of the ſoul, which conſiſts in enmity againſt God, and ſeparation from him? 'To be carnally minded is death; but to be 'ſpiritually minded is life and peace. Becauſe the 'carnal mind is enmity againſt God; for it is not ſub-'ject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Rom. viii. 6. 7. If this death, with the conſequence of it, is that which the devil has the power of, then muſt this death be deſtroyed.

But I think the firſt is true; therefore alſo the laſt. Rev. xxi. 4. we read, 'And God ſhall wipe away 'all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more '*death*, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there 'be any more pain; for the former things are paſſed 'away.' Here is a ſtate ſpoken of beyond all death; a ſtate wherein ſorrow, crying, and pain ſhall be no more. This ſtate is cotemporary with the new heaven and earth, after the lake of fire hath ceaſed.

Friend. We have always underſtood this paſſage to relate to the death of the body, and even to the death of the righteous only; but making this ſtate cotemporary with the new heavens and earth, ſeems to throw a new light upon the ſubject.

Miniſter. Moſt certainly the word *death* here implies the ſecond death; for we are informed, in the foregoing chapter, of the firſt reſurrection, even that of the martyrs, who were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, and for the word of God; and ſuch as had not worſhipped the beaſt and his image, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands: then we read of a thouſand years between this reſurrection, and the reſt of the dead living again: after this, we find, that the dead, ſmall and great, ſtood before God, and were judged; and ſuch as were not found written in the book of life, were caſt into the lake of fire, which is expreſsly called, 'the ſecond 'death;' which, as before obſerved, is probably the earth

earth in its melted ſtate. In this chapter we find, that all things are to be made new; and *death* is to be no more, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain. But this muſt be the ſecond death, or lake of fire; for the reſurrection of all the bodies, both of the juſt and unjuſt, had been ſpoken of before.

Thus, as all ſin, and all that bears the name of death, ſhall be entirely deſtroyed at laſt, the doctrine of endleſs miſery ſeems to fall to the ground, or, at leaſt, cannot be certainly proved from Scripture, but rather the contrary.

The time muſt come when all things ſhall be ſubject to Chriſt, when he ſhall deſtroy death, the laſt enemy, by deſtroying ſin, which is the ſting of death; ſo this dreadful ſin, as well as others, ſhall be no more. For if this was not to be the caſe, it could never be true that 'where ſin abounded, grace did much more 'abound;' for it never would abound quite ſo much; neither would death and hell be ſilent when God ſhall aſk the great queſtions, 'O death, where is thy ſting? 'O grave, (*or* hell) where is thy victory?' for death could ſay, Here is my ſting---that ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which muſt endure to all eternity, and which even divine grace ſhall never deſtroy; I have, therefore, the victory and dominion over theſe ſinners who have committed it, and will hold it while God himſelf exiſts. Then death could never be deſtroyed, nor ſwallowed up in victory; neither would ſorrow, crying, and pain ceaſe; neither could God ever be ALL IN ALL, in any other ſenſe, with reſpect to them, than he is now; nor would *every tongue ſwear*; neither would all things wholly be made new, nor all the former things ever paſs away! neither could the univerſal chorus of praiſe ever be ſung by every creature in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and throughout God's wide domain; and, finally, many Scriptures would never ſeem to be fulfilled, in the fulleſt ſenſe. Rom. v. 20, 21. 'But where ſin abounded, grace did 'much more abound; that as ſin hath reigned unto 'death, even ſo might grace reign, through righteouſ-

'nefs, unto eternal life, by Jefus Chrift our Lord.'---Now, if grace fhall abound more than fin, it fhall be as univerfal, and more powerful: but the firft is true, therefore alfo the laft. If grace fhall be as extenfive as fin, and more powerful, all who have finned fhall be reftored: but the firft is true, therefore alfo the laft.

What confequences muft follow from the fuppofition that fome of God's creatures fhall always remain his enemies! Either God created fome to be miferable to endlefs ages---or muft be fruftrated eternally in his defigns---or all muft be reftored at laft, and made happy by love and free love.

The firft is blafphemous, the fecond is difhonourable to God; therefore the third muft be true; for I cannot think of a fourth conclufion.

Friend. What do you think of the deplorable cafe of Efau, 'who, for one morfel of meat, fold his birth-'right; and afterwards, when he would have inherit-'ed the bleffing, he was rejected; for he found no place 'of repentance, though he fought it carefully, with 'tears?'

Minister. He certainly loft, or rather fold, his birth-right; in confequence of which he loft the bleffing belonging to the firft-born: but left any fhould be led to conclude from this, that poor *Efau* had no bleffings at all, the fame apoftle informs us, that 'By faith 'Ifaac bleffed Jacob and Efau, concerning things to 'come.' Heb. xi. 20. By this we find, he was bleffed as well as Jacob; but in a lefs degree.

Friend. Do we not read, 'Jacob have I loved, but 'Efau have I hated?' Rom. ix. 13. Mal. i. 2. 3.

Minister. Yes, moft certainly; but then this love and hatred, fo called, was manifefted to their pofterity, and not to their perfons, in the manner defcribed by the prophet; 'I have loved you, faith JEHOVAH; yet 'ye fay, Wherein haft thou loved us? Was not Efau 'Jacob's brother? faith JEHOVAH: yet I loved Jacob, 'and I hated Efau, and laid his mountains and his he-'ritage waffe, for the dragons of the wilderneffs.'---This manifeftation of hatred did not affect the eternal ftate

ſtate of their ſouls, but their condition in this world. God declared, that Jacob's ſeed ſhould exiſt as a diſtinct people to the end of time, but that Eſau's ſhould not: and this difference is evident; for the remains of Eſau's ſeed were, in the days of the Maccabees, incorporated with the ſeed of Jacob, and exiſted no more for ever, as a nation by themſelves. From Jacob's race the Meſſiah was to come, and all nations were to be bleſſed in the ſeed of Iſrael. In all theſe inſtances, and in many others, there was a manifeſt preference of Jacob to Eſau; but nothing like poſitive hatred can be intended.

Chriſt ſays, (St. Luke, xiv. 26.) 'If any man come 'to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife 'and children, and brethren, and ſiſters, yea, and his 'own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple.' But we cannot ſuppoſe our Lord intended poſitive, but comparative hatred; according to St. Matth. x. 37. 'He 'that loveth father or mother more than me, is not 'worthy of me; and he that loveth ſon or daughter 'more than me, is not worthy of me.'

Friend. What you have ſaid upon this ſubject appears to have ſome weight, and I will conſider it more fully hereafter: but I muſt beg leave to aſk you how you get over that great gulph which is placed in Hades, of which Abraham ſpeaks to the rich man, ſaying, 'And beſides all this, between us and you there is 'a great gulph fixed; ſo that they which would paſs 'from hence to you cannot; neither can they paſs to 'us that would come from thence.' Does not this imply the abſolute impoſſibility of the rich man's being ever reſtored?

Miniſter. You have aſked me many queſtions; give me leave to aſk you one.---Do you believe, that Jeſus of Nazareth was able to paſs that impaſſable gulph?

Friend. Indeed, that is a queſtion I never heard propoſed before, and which I am not prepared to anſwer, without farther conſideration. Pray, be ſo kind as to give an anſwer yourſelf, and tell me what you think of it.

Minister. I believe, that with *man* it is impoſſible; but with God all things are poſſible: and I believe that Jeſus Chriſt was not only able to paſs, but that he actually did paſs that gulph, which was impaſſable to all *men*, but not to him: and he aſſures St. John that he he had paſſed it; and not only ſo, but that he had the keys of the ſame in his poſſeſſion; for he ſaith--- 'Fear not; I am the firſt and the laſt; I am he that 'liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for ever- 'more, amen; and have the keys of hell and death.' And St. Peter informs us, that 'Chriſt once ſuffered 'for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt (that he might bring 'us unto God); being put to death in the fleſh, but 'quickened by the ſpirit; by which alſo he went and 'preached to the ſpirits in priſon; who ſometime were 'diſobedient, when once the long ſuffering of God 'waited, in the days of Noah, while the ark was a 'preparing.' And he alſo tells us, that we 'ſhall give 'account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the 'dead. For, for this cauſe was the goſpel preached alſo 'to them that are dead,' (in diſtinction from them that are quick) 'that they might be judged according to men 'in the fleſh, but live according to God in the ſpirit.' See Rev. i. 18. 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20. iv. 5, 6.

Friend. You know, the common opinion is, that the ſpirit of God, in Noah, preached unto the inhabitants of the old word; who, in St. Peter's time, were ſhut up in the priſon of hell: but, I muſt confeſs, it appears to me a very dark text.

Minister. If you only obſerve how particular the expreſſions are in theſe texts, I think it will ſoon appear, that not the Spirit of God in Noah, but the ſpirit or ſoul of Chriſt, in its diſembodied ſtate, is here intended. His body was doubtleſs quickened by his ſoul, or ſpirit coming into it again---Was it not?

Friend. It ſeems moſt reaſonable to believe it was.

Minister. Then obſerve the next words, *he went*; here the idea of a journey to a diſtant place is intimated,

mated, the original word being expreſſive of an actual paſſage from one place to another, and is the ſame that is uſed in verſe 22, for the aſcenſion of Chriſt into heaven, ſo that he appears to have gone into the priſon in the ſame proper ſenſe, as he afterwards went into heaven. He actually journeyed to the place of confinement, *and preached to the ſpirits*, &c. He preached *the goſpel*, no doubt; not to men in the body, but to *the ſpirits*---to thoſe in a diſembodied ſtate; not only ſo, but to *the ſpirits in priſon:* had they not been in the priſon, Chriſt would not have gone into the priſon to preach to them. But who were theſe ſpirits? St. Peter informs us, that they are thoſe who were *ſometime diſobedient*; but this expreſſion intimates that the time is perfectly paſt; as, 'Ye *were* the ſervants of ſin: 'for when ye *were* the ſervants of ſin, ye *were* free 'from righteouſneſs.' Rom. vi. 17, 20. St. Peter tells us when they were diſobedient; *when once the long ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing:* here he evidently diſtinguiſhes the two periods of their viſitation; one is called the preaching of Chriſt, by his ſpirit, after he was put to death in the fleſh; and the other is called the long-ſuffering of God, which waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing. The long ſuffering of God waited upon them, before they were drowned, while the ark was building; but Chriſt preached to them when they were ſpirits in priſon. They were diſobedient to God's long ſuffering; but it is not certain that they were ſo when Chriſt preached to them; but the contrary is intimated in theſe words: 'For, 'for this cauſe was the goſpel preached alſo to them that 'are dead,' &c. This cannot intend thoſe that are *ſpiritually* dead only, but thoſe whoſe bodies are dead; becauſe we here find *the dead* ſet in oppoſition to *the quick*, or thoſe whoſe bodies are alive, and not thoſe that are *ſpiritually alive*; for we may obſerve, that whenever the words *quick* and *dead* occur, by *quick* we always underſtand thoſe whoſe bodies are alive; and by *dead*, thoſe who have ceaſed to exiſt here.

Acts,

Acts, x. 40, &c. St. Peter, in his sermon to Cornelius and his family, informed them of Jesus, who was slain, whom 'God raised from the dead, and shewed 'him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses, 'chosen before of God; even to us, who did eat and 'drink with him, after he rose from the dead. And 'he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to 'testify, that it is he, who was ordained of God to be 'the judge of *quick* and *dead*.' And St. Paul says to Timothy, 'I charge thee, therefore, before God, and 'the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the *quick* and 'the *dead* at his appearing, and his kingdom, preach 'the word,' &c. See 2 Tim. iv. 1. So, in 1 Pet. iv. 5. the words *quick* and *dead* are used in the same manner; and then immediately, while the idea is warm in our minds, the apostle gives us the reasons why the gospel was preached to *the dead*, (*or* the spirits in prison) of which he had before informed us, and now repeats again, and assures us, that it was, *that they might be judged according to men in the flesh*: or, as though they had heard it while they were alive in the flesh: *but* also, that they might *live according to God, in the spirit*. The gospel not only *was*, but *is* preached to them that are dead in a *moral* or *spiritual* sense. It need not have been said, *For, for this cause was the gospel preached* ALSO *to them that are dead*, if only the spiritually dead are intended; for it is rarely preached to any other but such. Why should it be said, *that they might be judged according to men in the flesh*, if they were men in the flesh at the time when it was preached to them?

This passage proves the existence of the soul after the death of the body: for unless the souls of the antediluvians existed after the drowning of their bodies, Christ could not have preached to them in prison: but the *dead* being opposed to the *quick* in this passage, sufficiently, and even incontestibly, determines the sense.

With a little attention, we may easily be convinced, that Christ was not only designed to be a covenant of the

the people, (meaning the Jews) and a light to the Gentiles---which two descriptions comprehend all the living---but also, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house, which, if it be not a repetition) must intend the *dead*, as all the *living* were mentioned before.

'And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest 'be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and 'to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give 'thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be 'my salvation unto the ends of the earth. Thus saith 'JEHOVAH, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, 'and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I 'will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of 'the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit 'the desolate heritages.' Thus far the redeemer's work seems limited to the earth, and respects the living; but the prophet goes much farther, and says---'That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to 'them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves: they 'shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in 'all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; 'neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for he that 'hath mercy upon them shall lead them, even by the 'springs of water shall he guide them.' See Isaiah, xlii. 6. 7. xlix. 6, 8, 9, 10. compared with Rev. vii. 14---17. The work of the Saviour, as described by the elegant pen of Isaiah, (chap. lxi. 1, 2, 3.) seems to comprehend a great variety of particulars; all which he hath performed already, or shall execute in due time. 'The spirit of Adonai JEHOVAH is upon me; 'because JEHOVAH hath anointed me, (1) to preach 'good tidings to the meek: (2) he hath sent me to bind 'up the broken-hearted; (3) to proclaim liberty to the 'captives, (4) and the opening of the prison to them 'that are bound: (5) to proclaim the acceptable year 'of JEHOVAH, (6) and the day of vengeance of our 'God: (7) to comfort all that mourn: (8) to appoint 'unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them, *first*, 'beauty for ashes; *secondly*, the oil of joy for mourning; '*thirdly*,

'*thirdly*, the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavi-
'neſs; that they might be called, *firſt*, trees of righte-
'ouſneſs; *ſecondly*, the planting of JEHOVAH; (*and* ALL
'*for this great end*) that he might be glorified.'

Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by his proceſs, hath laid a foundation for the recovery of all men; 'For to this 'end Chriſt both died, roſe, and revived, that he might 'be Lord both of the dead and living.' Rom. xiv. 9. He paſſed through all our ſtates, that he might redeem us. He came down from heaven---he was conceived in the womb of Mary---he was born of her---he lived in the world unknown---he ſympathized with us in our ſorrows---he bare our ſins in his own body on the tree---he was buried---he deſcended into *Hades**---he aroſe---aſcended---ſitteth at the right hand of God---and maketh continual interceſſion for us.

It ſeemed neceſſary, that our Saviour ſhould viſit men in all ſituations†, that he might redeem them. The apoſtle

* The Greek ἅδης, *hades*, anſwers to the Hebrew שאול *ſheol*. The Saxon word *Hiel* (from whence Hell) very well expreſſes the meaning of both, as an unſeen place or ſtate. Much controverſy has exiſted whether Hades be a place or ſtate only. I think it includes both for the following reaſons:---

1. Our Lord ſays of the wicked rich man, (Luke, xvi. 23.) that 'in *Hades* he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and ſeeth Abra-'ham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom.' Here are two different *ſtates* or conditions; that of the rich man, who was in torments, and that of Lazarus, who was in Abraham's boſom. Both theſe *ſtates* are in Hades, or the *inviſible world*.

2. Though Hades is the *ſtate* of diſembodied ſpirits, both good and bad, yet every created ſpirit muſt have an *ubi*, a *place*, a ſome-where in which it is definitively; ſo that it is here, and not there, and much leſs every where. It is reaſonable, therefore, to conclude, that Hades conveys the idea of *place* as well as *ſtate*.

I conceive that Abraham's boſom, or Paradiſe, and Gehenna, or the place of torment, are both in Hades; that is in the hidden or unſeen world. The modern uſe of our Engliſh word Hell is reſtricted to the place and ſtate of puniſhment only; but שאול *ſheol*, as well as ἅδης, *hades*, is uſed, with greater latitude for the ſtate of the dead in general.

† That Chriſt went both to Paradiſe and Gehenna, we have the following proof---

1. Our

apoſtle informs us, ſaying, 'Foraſmuch as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe

1. Our Lord promiſed the dying thief, '*To-day* thou ſhalt be 'with me in Paradiſe:' conſequently, Chriſt was in Paradiſe that day.

2. David, ſpeaking prophetically of Chriſt, ſays, 'Thou wilt 'not leave my ſoul in *Sheol*,' i. e. the ſtate of the dead. That his ſoul ſhould not be left in *Sheol*, implied that it ſhould go there, even as the promiſe that his fleſh ſhould not ſee corruption implied that his body ſhould die. Pſalm. xvi. 10. Acts, ii, 29. St. Peter ſays, that Chriſt was put to death in the *fleſh*, but quickened by the *ſpirit*, by which he went and preached to the ſpirits in *priſon*. 1 Pet. iii. 19. And St. Paul alſo ſays, that Chriſt deſcended into the *lower parts* of the earth, Col. ii. 15.; and that he is Lord of the living *and the dead*, Rom. xiv. 9. And our Lord ſays to John, that he hath the keys of *Hades*, i. e. the unſeen world, and of death, *i. e.* the grave; that he openeth (Hades and the grave) and no man ſhutteth; that he ſhutteth and no man openeth. Rev. i. 18. iii. 7.

From the above paſſages it ſeems clear, that when he was in Hades he viſited both thoſe in *Paradiſe* and thoſe in *priſon*. Paul gives a reaſon, Epheſ. iv. 9, 10. why Chriſt thus deſcended and aſcended, namely, that he might *fill all things*. I underſtand the apoſtle as ſaying, that Chriſt did this that he might fulfil all the Father's will, by taking upon himſelf the government of heaven, earth, and the unſeen world; that he might be Lord of all places, and of all perſons; conſequently, the dead, whether good or bad, are as much under the government of Chriſt as the living; and as he received this univerſal empire that he might ſubject *all* things to himſelf, 1 Cor. xv. 24---28; that he might reconcile *all* things to the Father, Col. i. 20, that he might gather together, or rehead, *all* things in himſelf, Epheſ. i. 10.; ſo I am perſuaded that he will do this great work, for *he is able to ſubdue all* things to himſelf. Phil. iii. 21.

We will here add the opinion of Biſhop Beveridge in his Comment on the Thirty-nine Articles. The third article reads thus--- 'As Chriſt died for us, and was buried, ſo alſo it is to be believed 'that he went down into hell.' On which the Biſhop thus expatiates---'Though this Article be in itſelf as clear and certain as 'any of the reſt, yet men, having exerciſed their fancies ſo variouſly upon it, have drawn, as it were, a veil over it, and eclipſed 'the light of it; and hence it is, that ſome do not rightly underſtand it, others ſcruple it, yea, and others do in plain terms contradict and gainſay it. That Chriſt deſcended into hell is not a 'truth of yeſterday's growth; but almoſt all the fathers of the primitive

'likewise took part of the same; that through death, 'he might destroy him that had the power of death, 'that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through 'fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bond-'age.' Heb. ii. 14, 15. It was not only necessary that he should die, to vanquish death, and to redeem us from its power; but it was equally needful for him to go into those places where spirits were confined in the regions of darkness; that he might gain universal dominion, spoil principalities, and redeem the captives whom he had bought with his blood, in order that he might ascend up to heaven, and open to his followers the gates of eternal life.

'Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, 'he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 'Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also de-'scended first into the lower parts of the earth? He 'that descended is the same also that ascended up far 'above all heavens, that he might fill all things.' Ephes. iv. 8, 9, 10. 'And having spoiled principali-'ties and powers, he made a shew of them openly, 'triumphing over them in it.' Col. ii. 15.

Thus our Saviour, by his divine process, hath obtained a right to open the prison doors, and let the captives go free: and though the rich man was in torments, where he could not get a drop of water to cool

'primitive church have acknowledged and received it as an article 'of their faith.' He then produces the testimony of twelve of them, passing by many others; among whom St. Ignatius says expressly, 'He (Christ) descended into hell alone, but ascended with 'a multitude.' And St. Jerome says, 'Hell is a place of punish-'ments and torments, where the rich man, who used to be cloathed 'in purple, was seen; whither also the Lord descended, that he 'might loose them from prison who were bound there: for none 'is delivered from hell, but only by the grace of Christ, and 'therefore did Christ descend thither after his death.'

That ancient formulary of faith, The Apostle's Creed, says, that Christ *suffered, died*, and was buried that he *descended into hell*. Modern critics labour to prove that the meaning of the creed is only, *that Christ was laid in the grave*. Common sense refutes this explication.

cool his tongue, and had *judgment without mercy*, because he had *shewed no mercy:* yet it is possible, that, by the blood of the covenant, he may be sent forth out of the pit wherein is no water. See Zech. ix. 11. The Lord Jesus is able to take the prey from the mighty, and to deliver the lawful captive. Isaiah, xlix. 24.

'Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, 'being bound in affliction and iron; because they re-'belled against the words of God, and contemned the 'counsel of the Most High; therefore he brought 'down their heart with labour; they fell down, and 'there was none to help.'---This evidently points out the deplorable, miserable state of sinners, cut off in their sins; having rebelled against God's words, and contemned his counsels; for which reason he hath shut them up in darkness, and in the shadow of death; in such a situation, that no power but his own can give them the least help, much less *release*. Such circumstances seldom occur in this life; but these words are a lively and affecting description of the miseries of the future state.

'Then they cried unto JEHOVAH in their trouble, 'and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought 'them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and 'brake their bands in sunder. O that men would praise 'JEHOVAH for his goodness, and for his wonderful 'works to the children of men! For he hath broken 'the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.' Psalm cvii. 10---16.

This amazing deliverance seems to be described in such language as corresponds much better with the deliverance of the spirits from their dreadful prison, than with any temporal mercies that are bestowed on mankind *here on earth*. 'The righteous shall see it and re-'joice, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso 'is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall 'understand the loving kindness of JEHOVAH.' Ver. 42, 43.

Those who are acquainted with the Divine character, and see his designs of mercy towards his creatures,

ſhall rejoice in the ſame: they that are wiſe ſhall obſerve theſe things, and ſhall underſtand his loving kindneſs, and that 'JEHOVAH is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. Pſalm cxlv. 9.

Thus, how impoſſible ſoever it may appear to us, that the rich man ſhould ever be delivered, we muſt remember, that 'with God nothing ſhall be impoſſible.' St. Luke, i. 37. 'Is there any thing too hard 'for JEHOVAH?' Gen. xviii. 14. 'Behold, (ſays he) 'I am JEHOVAH, the God of all fleſh: Is there any 'thing too hard for me?' Jer. xxxii. 27.

Our Saviour ſays, (St. Matth. xix. 24. St. Mark, x. 25. St. Luke, xviii. 25.) 'It is eaſier for a camel to 'go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man 'to enter into the kingdom of God.' Whether the word here uſed intends a camel or a cable, it certainly implied the greateſt difficulty imaginable, even amounting, in the view of his diſciples, to a natural impoſſibility, or they would not have been, as the evangeliſt expreſſes it, *exceedingly amazed, and aſtoniſhed out of meaſure* at his words, 'ſaying among themſelves, Who 'then can be ſaved?' But though Jeſus meant to repreſent the matter as in itſelf a kind of natural impoſſibility, and abſolutely impoſſible to men, yet he could not intend thereby that it never ſhould be accompliſhed, becauſe he immediately adds, 'With men, this is 'impoſſible; but not with God; for with God all 'things are poſſible.' St. Mark, x. 27. Therefore, though it was impoſſible for *men* to paſs the gulph in Hades, yet, as we have ſeen, Chriſt was able; and therefore, as we know not the *ne plus ultra* of his power to ſave, we cannot poſitively conclude *againſt the Reſtoration* from this inſtance of the rich man, unleſs we could find ſome paſſages of Scripture where God has threatened never to reſtore, or reconcile ſuch to himſelf, whom he hath once caſt off: the contrary to which I think may be proved: but I am at preſent conſidering, that, in the nature of things, it is not impoſſible for God to reſtore the rich man, if he ſo pleaſes; and, conſequently, others that are in the ſame ſituation.

Behold

Behold the rich man in another world!---He ſeems *now* to have much more true benevolence in him, than in his life-time; for when he could not obtain a drop of water for his tongue, he pleads much more earneſtly for Lazarus to be ſent to his five brethren, to teſtify to them, leſt they alſo ſhould come into the ſame place of torment with himſelf. Here he urges the matter moſt earneſtly, and does not ſeem willing to be denied. This ſhews him not to have been ſo loſt to virtue as Satan; ſince he and his angels, though miſerable themſelves, ſeek to make all men ſo too, though their torments are increaſed thereby.

Add to all this, that Abraham called the rich man *Son*, and bade him remember, that in his life-time he had his good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things; and that therefore it was but reaſonable that the ſcene ſhould be changed; that Lazarus ſhould be comforted, and he tormented. And I think nothing can be fairly argued from his caſe in favour of *endleſs damnation*: for in caſe he was doomed to ſuffer *while God exiſts*, there could be no proportion between the ſufferings, torments, and evil things of Lazarus on earth, and thoſe which *he* endured in hell; whereas it is intimated in the Scriptures, that all things are determined by number, weight, and meaſure. Let us hear what our Lord has ſaid upon the ſubject. St. Luke, xii. 47, 48. 'And that 'ſervant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not 'himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be 'beaten with MANY ſtripes. But he that knew not, 'and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be 'beaten with FEW ſtripes; for unto whomſoever much 'is given, of him ſhall be much required: and to 'whom men have committed much, of him they will 'aſk the more.' But what difference, ſo much to be noticed, could there be, if both were to be beaten *to all eternity?* Or how could either be ſaid to have FEW, if there was never to be an end? Impoſſible! Rev. xviii. 7. 'How much ſhe (Babylon) hath glorified her'ſelf, and lived deliciouſly; ſo much torment and ſor'row give her.' All this appears juſt and reaſonable:

but to suppose a poor ignorant heathen, or a child of ten years old, will remain in misery as long as the most persecuting tyrant, or apostate Christian, seems to contradict all the ideas we have of justice and equity, as well as of goodness; for in this case, who can suppose that each one is exactly rewarded according to his works? And especially, can any think, that *mercy* has any hand in a reward where there is seemingly no proportion? Whereas we read, (Psalm lxii. 12.) 'Also 'unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou ren-'dereſt to every man according to his work*.'

Friend.

* I think it clear from the Scriptures, that future judgment and punishment stand upon the ground of *mediation*, and that they are intended as *means* to accomplish the great end of subduing all things to Christ, that all things may be reconciled to the Father by him. The common notion of judgment is, that the moral law is a covenant of works; that all men are under it as a covenant; that we have universally broken it, and are become guilty; that this covenant knows nothing of mercy; that the curse of it is endless punishment; that those who die in unbelief are in no sense related to Christ; but that *God out of Christ* will inflict the whole penalty of the broken covenant upon them. Hence endless damnation is vociferated from almost every pulpit. But men and brethren, are these things so?

1. I read of many covenants in my Bible; but a covenant *of works* I have not found there. That the moral law was given to the Israelites on the ground of *mercy* is evident, because it is introduced by the Almighty, saying, I am the Lord *thy* God. Here God's gracious relation to them is the reason why they ought to obey that law.---And in the second commandment God says, he shews *mercy* to thousands who love him, and keep his commandments. Here then is mercy; but the idea of mercy and a covenant of works are said to be opposite; consequently, the moral law is not a covenant of works. Add to this, that the apostle says, that the law is not against the promises. Gal. iii. 21. But a covenant of works is against the promises; therefore the law, as given to the Israelites, is not a covenant of works.

2. Adam was not under a covenant of works---at least the Bible mentions no such thing. Besides which, the very idea which the Hebrew word ברית *berith*, *covenant*, conveys cannot be admitted without the prior consideration of sin; for ברית *berith*, signifies *purification*; and to make a covenant is literally, *to cut off a purifier*, and always has

Friend. Indeed, I could not have thought that ſo much could have been ſaid upon that ſide of the caſe; and though I am not yet wholly ſatisfied, I muſt confeſs, ſome of my great difficulties ſeem to be removed, from what you have ſaid; and yet there appears ſomething very dreadful in the account. Pray, do you underſtand it as a parable?

Minister. I am moſt inclined to think it is a piece of real hiſtory, known to our Saviour, who was well

has typical reſpect to the death of Chriſt, for which there could be no reaſon before Adam ſinned.

3. That Adam was under a law is fully granted; but it was a law of love, as well as of holineſs. A rational creature cannot be without law, either in heaven, earth, or hell; but ſtill it is a law of love; for the mercy, the tender mercy of the Lord is over *all* his works. Pſalm cxlv. 9.

That Adam broke the law of his creation is alſo fully granted, and that death was the conſequence to him and *all* his ſeed: but it is contended that a diſpenſation of life to *all* was then immediately manifeſted in the promiſed ſeed, who is 'the Lord from heaven, 'the quickening ſpirit,' through whom 'juſtification to life comes 'upon ALL men.'

4. I therefore conſider, that when Adam ſinned, the diſpenſations of God towards men took a new ground; that the plan of mediation was brought forward; that the Father, as an act of his love, gave *all* things into the hand of the ſon. John iii. 35. The ſon, in the fulneſs of time, came in our nature, to aſſume his government, and to adminiſter this kingdom; and ſhall continue his government, till all things ſhall be ſubdued, reheaded, and reſtored. The government of all things is ſo compleatly in the hands of Chriſt, that 'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all 'judgment to the ſon.' It appears alſo, that the Father will puniſh no man, for 'he hath given the ſon power to execute judgment 'alſo, becauſe he is the ſon of man.' Hence one great doctrine of the goſpel, which is to be declared to men, is, that 'Chriſt is 'ordained by God to judge both the quick and the dead,' Acts, x. 42.; and 'that we muſt all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of 'Chriſt.'

From ſuch Scriptures I learn, that judgment is a mediatorial work, not founded upon the moral law as a covenant of works, but upon the mercy of God in Chriſt, and that it is a mean to an end; and that, however judgment may be ſhewn without mercy, during the proper age thereof, yet mercy ſhall finally rejoice againſt judgment.

acquainted with what paſſed in the ſpiritual, as well as the natural world; and who intended thereby to give an awful warning to the Phariſees, (who were covetous) of the dreadful condition of wicked rich men in the next ſtate; and eſpecially of thoſe who neglect or deſpiſe the poor.

Friend. I am inclined to think with you in this matter; and therefore, without any farther delay, I ſhall paſs to mention another ſtrong objection to the doctrine of the Reſtoration of all men, *viz.* the inſtance of *Judas*; of whom our Saviour ſays, 'The 'ſon of man goeth, as it is written of him: but woe 'to that man by whom the ſon of man is betrayed; it 'had been good for that man if he had not been born.' St. Matth. xxvi. 24. St. Mark, xiv. 21. If Judas ſhould ever be reſtored, how could the Saviour ſay, 'Good were it for that man if had never been born?' I think you will find it difficult to remove this objection; for, if he is ever to be happy, (though after many ages) it will be good for him that he was born.

Minister. I cannot think that this is ſo ſtrong an argument againſt the general Reſtitution, as moſt that uſe it imagine. It was a common proverb among the Jews, when any great misfortune happened to a man or his family, to ſay, 'Good were it for that man, if 'he had never been born.' And thus our Saviour uſed it with great propriety reſpecting Judas: for who that thinks with any reaſon at all would not have wiſhed that he had never been born, rather than to have betrayed the dear Redeemer?

Friend. But can any thing leſs than *endleſs* damnation be ſufficient to juſtify the expreſſion of 'Good were 'it for that man that he had never been born?'

Minister. I am of opinion that even worldly troubles (ſhort as they are) may ſufficiently juſtify the expreſſion. There are a thouſand circumſtances into which the children of Adam fall, that make their caſe infinitely worſe than though they had never been born, even without ſuppoſing a ſtate of future puniſhment at all. I had rather, a thouſand times, never have been born,

born, than to have betrayed Chriſt, even upon the ſuppoſition that I had never been doomed to ſuffer for it beyond this life. Job, when he had loſt his ſubſtance, his children, and his eaſe, opened his mouth, and, through exceſs of grief, curſed the day of his birth; though it does not appear that he had any fear of future damnation, but the reverſe.

'And Job ſpake and ſaid, Let the day periſh where-
'in I was born; and the night in which it was ſaid,
'There is a man-child conceived. Let that day be
'darkneſs; let not God regard it from above: neither
'let the light ſhine upon it. Let darkneſs and the ſha-
'dow of death ſtain it; let a cloud dwell upon it: let
'the blackneſs of day terrify it. As for that night, let
'darkneſs ſeize upon it: let it not be joined unto the
'days of the year; let it not come into the number of
'the months. Lo! let that night be ſolitary, let no
'joyful voice come therein. Let them curſe it that curſe
'the day, who are ready to raiſe up their mourning.
'Let the ſtars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it
'look for light, but have none; neither let it ſee the
'dawning of the day; becauſe it ſhut not up the doors
'of my mother's womb, nor hid ſorrow from mine
'eyes. Why died I not from the womb? Why did
'not I give up the Ghoſt, when I came out of the
'belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the
'the breaſts that I ſhould ſuck? For now ſhould I
'have been ſtill, and been quiet; I ſhould have ſlept;
'then had I been at reſt, with kings and counſellors of
'the earth, who built deſolate places for themſelves;
'or with princes, that had gold, who filled their houſes
'with ſilver: or, as an hidden untimely birth, I had
'not been; as infants, who never ſaw light. There
'the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary
'be at reſt. There the priſoners reſt together; they
'hear not the voice of the oppreſſor. The ſmall and
'great are there; and the ſervant is free from his maſ-
'ter.' See Job, iii. 2---19.

From this diſcourſe it ſeems, that Job thought it would have been better for him never to have been born,

born, than to have fallen into such sore troubles in this present life, without taking the other into his account; but if he had known that he had been doomed to suffer the amazing torments of the second death, in the lake of fire and brimstone, what would he have said? Even upon the supposition that it was only to last for ages, he would have thought that his being born into this world, to be fitted for such a punishment, would have been the greatest curse that could have befallen him.

If Job, who could say, 'I know that my Redeemer 'liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the 'earth: and, though after my skin worms destroy this 'body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see 'for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, 'though my reins be consumed within me. He know-'eth the way that I take; and when he hath tried me, I 'shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps; 'his way have I kept, and not declined; neither have I 'gone back from the commandment of his lips: I have 'esteemed the words of his mouth more than my ne-'cessary food. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in 'him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. 'He also shall be my salvation. My righteousness I 'hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not 'reproach me so long as I live.' (See Job, xix. 25, 26, 27. xxiii. 10, 11, 12. xiii. 15, 16. xxvii. 6.) And who can make such a solemn protestation of his innocence and uprightness, before God and man, as we find in the xxix. xxx. and xxxi. chapters of that book? If such a man had reason to say, 'Wherefore, then, hast 'thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh! that 'I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! I 'should have been as though I had not been; I should 'have been carried from the womb to the grave,' (see Job, x. 18, 19.) with what amazing propriety might Christ say of Judas the traitor, who sinned in such a dreadful manner, and had such horrible guilt on his conscience; who died in black despair, perished in such an awful situation, in his sins, and, probably, by his own

own hands* ; who ſuffered the moſt violent agitations of mind, died under the power of the horrid ſuggeſtions

* Upon mature conſideration on this ſubject, I think it is to be doubted, yea, that there is evidence that Judas did *not* periſh by his own hands. The candid reader will attend to the following thoughts.—

1. Judas, though he was a traitor, yet was not a blaſphemer of Chriſt; but, being arreſted in his act of treachery, *he repented himſelf.*

2. His repentance had the greateſt poſſible proofs of ſincerity. He confeſſed his guilt—he confeſſed it too before the parties concerned with him in his ſin; parties who were well able to reſent his confeſſion, as a heavy accuſation of themſelves—his confeſſion, like his ſin, was alſo public—and he cleared his hands of the price of blood; he brought the thirty pieces of ſilver, and threw them down in the temple, and ſaid, I have ſinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.

3. The words *και απελθων, απηγξαλο, kai apelthon, apegxato*, which we render 'and departing he hanged himſelf,' literally are, 'and 'departing was ſtrangled.' Mat. xxvii. v. Dr. Hammond paraphraſes the paſſage thus—'He was ſo affected with ſorrow, hor-'ror, and deſpair, that in a fit of melancholy, or ſuffocation, he ſud-'denly fell down upon his face, and burſt, and died. See Acts, 'i. 19.;' for which, in his notes, he gives many authorities. Dr. Lightfoot alſo, on the paſſage, ſays, that Judas did not hang himſelf, but was ſtrangled. It muſt be confeſſed, that the Doctor moſt pioufly makes the *devil* to be the executioner of Judas. I avail myſelf of his literary teſtimony, but reject his ſuperſtition.

4. Being ſtrangled with grief, though not very common, is a circumſtance that ſometimes happens in caſes of extreme and ſudden anguiſh of mind. An inſtance of it happened in the month of July, 1798, on the public theatre at Liverpool. John Palmer, the comedian, playing the character of the *Stranger*, in a comedy of the ſame name, ſuddenly fell backward and died upon the ſpot. No other reaſon could be given, but that the character of the *Stranger* was ſo expreſſive of Mr. Palmer's own diſtreſſed ſituation, that he was overcome by it, and ſtrangled with grief.

N. B. Mr. Palmer's domeſtic happineſs had been lately ruined.

5. It does not appear, that covetouſneſs was the great motive from which Judas betrayed our Lord; for if ſo, would he have been content with the paltry ſum of thirty pieces of ſilver, which is only about three pounds fifteen ſhillings? Would he not rather have aſked a princely ſum? And that the rulers would have given it, is not to be doubted, for we know they gave *large* money to huſh the ſoldiers afterwards. Mat. xxviii. 13. It is extremely improbable,

ons of the great enemy of men, without one ſmile, or look of forgiveneſs, from Jeſus, or even daring to ſeek it;

bable, therefore, that Judas took this reward merely from the motive of covetouſneſs, (though it is ſaid, he was a thief, and had the bag) we ought to ſearch for ſome other principles of action in him. Without going far about we may perceive ſome very adequate ones, which were common to all the apoſtles, and from which Judas acted the part of a traitor. The kingdom of Chriſt is a ſpiritual kingdom, and the ſubjects of it muſt, in the preſent ſtate, be ſufferers, and wait by faith for a reward in an adminiſtration of his kingdom yet to come. Our Lord often taught this; but his diſciples had no ears to hear it. They dreamed of a *temporal* kingdom, and ardently expected its honours and profits. Hence they often contended who ſhould be the *greateſt*, i. e. who ſhould be *prime miniſter* in the kingdom. Hence John and James, by the intereſt of their mother, ſought for the two chief places; and hence the indignation of the other diſciples when they heard the requeſt of the brothers. Now only ſuppoſe that Judas had the ſame views of the kingdom as being temporal, and the ſame ambition to be a great man, we ſhall then find ſufficient motives for his conduct. He had ſeen the miracles of Jeſus, and was highly impreſſed with a ſenſe of his power; he had ſeen his modeſty and humility, and, like the kinſmen of our Lord, could not reconcile his character of Meſſiah with his low condition and love of privacy. See John, vii. 3, 4. Might he not think that if he could bring his maſter into ſuch circumſtances as ſhould cauſe him to avow his character openly, and to take the kingdom, that he ſhould even do a good work? That then he ſhould not only be forgiven, but even highly rewarded, as having ſhewn his love to Jeſus? All this ſeems very natural; and the ſmallneſs of the reward which he had from the rulers ſeems to ſhew, that he had hopes much beyond *that*. Add to this, that Judas did not think of any harm to his maſter is evident, for "when he ſaw he was *condemned*, he repented himſelf," &c. Mat. xxvii. 3. I do not ſee but that Judas loved his maſter as really as Peter, who denied him, or as the other diſciples, who forſook him and fled; but being more deeply tinctured with ambition to poſſeſs the temporal honours of the kingdom, he fell more deeply than the other diſciples did; and ſeeing the deſign of his plan fruſtrated, and the life of his beloved maſter in danger, he made every reparation which a ſincere but miſtaken man could make. he avowed the innocence of Jeſus—confeſſed his own guilt—returned the money with abhorrence—and, ſo great was his grief that it ſtrangled him—he fell down on his face, and his bowels guſhed out. Thus he ſtands to this day as *an awful warning of the ſin of worldly ambition in the kingdom of Chriſt.*

6. I know

it; whose sorrow in this life far exceeded Job's, (for Job had no sense of guilt, treason, and ingratitude---nor was he filled with rage, blasphemy, and despair)---and who must probably have his portion in the second death---'Good were it for that man if he had never 'been born!' even upon the supposition that his torments are not designed to continue *while God exists*.

Jeremiah is another instance much to my purpose, who wished that he had never been born, even at the

6. I know it will be objected, that our Lord called Judas a *devil*. I answer, He did so; and he likewise called Peter *Satan*---The same sin was common to them both--they did not relish the things that were of God---the spiritual and suffering state of his kingdom---but the things that were of men---temporal greatness and honours. Into this they both fell; Judas most remarkably.

Again, I shall be told that Judas went to his own place, *i. e.* Hell. I answer, That he fell from his apostleship is evident, and another was chosen in his room; as it is written, 'Let another take his 'office;' (Psalm cix. 8. Acts, i. 20.) but that he is gone to hell I cannot learn from the Scriptures, notwithstanding that our translation of Acts, i. 24, 25. seems to imply it. Take a more literal translation of these two verses---'And they prayed and said, Thou, 'Lord, who knowest the hearts of all, shew which of these two 'thou hast chosen, to take a part of this ministry, and to go into 'the proper place of the apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell.' See Scarlett's New Translation of the New Testament.

That Judas is called 'the son of perdition,' may be well accounted for from his fearful end. The Hebrews say, sons of Belial, for wicked men, Deut. xiii. 13.---Son of the bow, when they would express an arrow, Job, iv. 19.---Sons of the fire, *i. e.* sparks, Job, v. 7.---Son of death, 2 Sam. xii. 5.---Son of stripes, Deut. xxv. 2. So our Lord says, son of perdition, *i. e.* he that will perish.

N. B. The repentance of Judas has been objected to as not being *evangelical*, because it is said in our translation, 'he repented 'himself'; that is,' say the objectors, 'his repentance was *his own* 'work'---not the work of the spirit of God.' So low a quibble as this does not deserve an answer; nor would I notice it, but for the sake of honest enquiring minds, who are liable to be injured by such as lie in wait to deceive. The word μεταμεληθεις, *metameletheis*, by which the repentance of Judas is expressed, is the same that our Lord used Mat. xxi, 29 and 32. Will any man say, that Christ did not speak of evangelical repentance in these places?

very

very time when he knew the Lord was his helper; only becauſe he had been put in the ſtocks by Paſhur, and had ſuffered a little pain and ſhame in a good cauſe. He was not afraid of *endleſs damnation*, nor yet of any future puniſhment; for he thus expreſſed himſelf in all the language of full aſſurance: 'But JEHOVAH is with 'me, as a mighty terrible one; therefore my perſe-'cutors ſhall ſtumble, and they ſhall not prevail; they 'ſhall be greatly aſhamed, for they ſhall not proſper; 'their everlaſting confuſion ſhall never be forgotten. 'But, O JEHOVAH of Hoſts, that trieſt the righteous, 'and ſeeſt the reins and the heart, let me ſee thy ven-'geance on them, (*or* thou wilt let me ſee, &c.) for 'unto thee have I opened my cauſe. Sing unto JE-'HOVAH, praiſe ye JEHOVAH: for he hath delivered 'the ſoul of the poor from the hand of evil doers.' How ſtrong his faith! how full his aſſurance! Yet it is evident, that he thought it would have been much better for him, perſonally, never to have been born; for he immediately adds, 'Curſed be the day wherein 'I was born; let not the day wherein my mother bare 'me be bleſſed. Curſed be the man who brought 'tidings to my father, ſaying, A man child is born 'unto thee, making him very glad. And let that man 'be as the cities which JEHOVAH overthrew, and re-'pented not: and let him hear the cry in the morn-'ing, and the ſhouting at noon-tide, becauſe he ſlew 'me not from the womb: or that my mother might 'have been my grave; and her womb to be always 'great with me. Wherefore came I out of the womb 'to ſee labour and ſorrow, that my days ſhould be con-'ſumed with ſhame?' See Jer. xx. 11---18.

Here is not a word about a ſtate of future puniſhment, much leſs *endleſs damnation*, and yet the good prophet Jeremiah thought, that if he had never been born, it would have been far better for him.

FRIEND. I muſt confeſs, I never before conſidered it poſſible to anſwer this objection; you have done much towards ſolving it: but you muſt conſider that both Job and Jeremiah paſſionately exclaimed, and, through ſorrow,

ſorrow, uttered ſuch raſh words as, in their cooler moments, they repented of; and therefore, what they ſpake of themſelves cannot wholly ſet aſide the objection. Had they delivered thoſe expreſſions as general truths, and declared that men had much better never have been born, than to have ſuffered ſuch degrees of worldly ſorrow, it would have more than anſwered the objection; but, when men under grief exclaim in ſuch a manner, we cannot ground a matter of ſuch importance upon what they ſay reſpecting themſelves; as their minds, being overwhelmed with trouble, and the immediate ſenſations of pain, are biaſſed, and cannot utter the calm dictates of ſober reaſon: but Chriſt, though under great ſorrows himſelf, ſaw the caſe of Judas ſo deplorable, that he expreſſed himſelf thus reſpecting him; which was the ſober truth, without exaggeration; and could this be ſaid of him, or of any other of the human race, upon the ſuppoſition that miſery is not abſolutely endleſs?

Minister. Our Lord, ſpeaking of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, ſays, 'And woe unto them that are with 'child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days,' (ſee St. Mat. xxiv. 19. St. Mark, xiii. 17.) not becauſe of their future endleſs damnation, in diſtinction from others, but on account of their preſent trouble and ſorrow, as is explained, Luke, xxi. 23.---'But woe to 'them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck 'in thoſe days; for there ſhall be great diſtreſs in the 'land, and wrath upon this people.' And when the Saviour was led to death, we read, 'And there follow-'ed him a great company of people, and of women, 'who alſo bewailed and lamented him. But Jeſus, 'turning unto them, ſaid, Daughters of Jeruſalem, 'weep not for me, but for yourſelves, and for your 'children. For behold the days are coming, in the 'which they ſhall ſay, Bleſſed are the barren, and 'the wombs that never bare, and the paps which ne-'ver gave ſuck. Then ſhall they ſay to the moun-'tains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if 'they do theſe things in a green tree, what ſhall be 'done in the dry?' St. Luke, xxiii. 27---31.

And who would not, a thouſand times, chooſe rather never to have been born, than even to ſee, far leſs experience, the miſeries which came upon Jeruſalem and its inhabitants? Would it not have been better for mothers never to have been born, than to have killed and eaten their own children in the ſiege? And would it not have been better for the children never to have been born, than to have been food for their mothers?

But Solomon not only repreſents a ſtate of great miſery and affliction in this life, as worſe than not to have been born, but alſo a ſtate of the greateſt proſperity, if it ends in diſgrace; for he ſays, 'If a man beget an 'hundred children, and live many years, ſo that the 'days of his years be many, and his ſoul be not filled 'with good, and alſo, that he have no burial; I ſay, 'that an untimely birth is better than he. For he (the 'untimely birth) cometh in with vanity, and departeth 'in darkneſs, and his name ſhall be covered with 'darkneſs. Moreover, he hath not ſeen the ſun, 'nor known any thing: this hath more reſt than the 'other. Yea, though he live a thouſand years twice 'told, yet hath he ſeen no good (*i. e.* no equivalent 'good, to balance his diſgrace). Do not all go to one 'place?' All came from duſt, and turn to duſt again. See Eccleſ. vi. 3---6.

The ſtate here deſcribed by Solomon is not only infinitely better than the damnation of hell, though limited by certain periods, but far preferable to many, if not to moſt ſituations of men in this life; and yet he prefers an untimely birth to a man who lives more than twice the age of Methuſelah, and has an hundred children of his own, if he has not his ſoul filled or ſatisfied with good; and that he hath no burial, or has not honour (credit *or* reputation) at his death.

Long life and *many children* were formerly eſteemed as the greateſt of bleſſings; but as the things of this life cannot fill the ſoul with good, ſo a man had better never have been born, than to have enjoyed the good things of this world in the greateſt profuſion, if he dies in diſgrace, and has no burial, or is not honoured at his death. Yet this is not worthy to be named in the

the same day with the damnation of hell; yet is frequently threatened as a great and terrible judgment; which, if it falls upon a man, however he may have enjoyed long life, health, wealth, and all kinds of prosperity, it makes it worse for him than if he had never been born, according to the decision of God himself; and, therefore, no wonder that Christ said of wicked Judas, 'Good were it for that man, if he had never 'been born *.'

Though I have answered you so largely, yet one word might have sufficed to have answered the whole objection at first; *viz.* Had Judas died before he had been born, and perished from his mother's womb, he would never have sinned, far less betrayed Christ; he would have entered into peace immediately, 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the 'weary are at rest.' In that case he would have escaped the judgment that came upon him, and would have had more rest than those who should live in all the affluence of life two thousand years, and beget each an hundred children, and yet should not be honoured at their death.

Some would have answered the objection shorter, by saying, Christ promised twelve thrones to his twelve

* The words 'Good were it for that man if he had never been 'born,' are proverbial—This has been disputed, and the proof of it has been called for: let it now be given. Mr. Winchester has referred to the words of Job, Solomon, and Jeremiah, but has not quoted any Jewish authors; Dr. Gill shall therefore do *that* for him; and no man, who knows the Doctor's character, will dispute his authority in Jewish literature. In his notes on Mat. xxvi. 44. and Mark, xiv. 21. where these words concerning Judas occur, he says, 'This is a rabbinical phrase, *frequently* used in one form or 'other, and sometimes as our Lord spoke it; and it is applied to 'such as speak false and lying words, and regard not the glory of 'their Creator.' Of this the Doctor gives proof, by refering to *Zohar, in Gen. fol.* 41. 1. *Misn. Chagiga, c.* 2. *sec.* 1. *T. Bab. Chagiga, fol.* 16. 1. besides many instances of its being used in other forms elsewhere.

It becomes those who maintain the doctrine of endless misery to consider how weak a foundation a common proverb is, to support such a tremendous idea.

apoſtles, among whom Judas was one; and therefore he muſt be reſtored, or the promiſe cannot be fulfilled; ſee St. Mat. xix. 28.; but this I do not inſiſt upon; nevertheleſs, thoſe who anſwer the objection this way make an obſervation that may be worth attention, *viz.* that Peter, ſpeaking of Judas, ſaith, 'Let his habitation be deſolate, and let no man dwell therein;' that is, Let his manſion be reſerved for him, let no man take poſſeſſion of it; but 'his biſhopric, or office, 'let another take.' See Acts, i. 20. compared with Pſalm lxix. 25. cix. 8. But I am rather of opinion that the deſolation of the habitation of the wicked, and the want of inhabitants in their tents, reſpects this ſtate, and is part of the curſe pronounced upon all traitors; and may therefore, in an eminent ſenſe, be applied to Judas, and alſo to the rebellious nation of the Jews at large; and therefore, as theſe words do not intend their reſtoration, ſo neither are they any objection to it; for St. Paul applies part of the lxixth Pſalm to the Jews as truly as St. Peter applies it to Judas: ſee Rom. xi. 9, 10. And yet he ſays, 'I ſay then, have they ſtumbled 'that they ſhould fall? God forbid: but rather, through 'their fall, ſalvation is come unto the gentiles, to provoke them to jealouſy. Now, if the fall of them be 'the riches of the world, and the diminiſhing of them 'the riches of the gentiles, how much more their fulneſs?' And thus, from the 11th verſe to the end of the chapter, goes on to ſpeak of their being again received, reconciled, and graſted again into their own olive tree; and that their blindneſs is only for a time; 'And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved. There ſhall come 'out of Sion a deliverer, and ſhall turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob:' that God's covenant, or promiſe, is to take their ſins away; that they are beloved for the fathers' ſakes; that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; that, therefore, they ſhall obtain mercy at laſt; and that, for this very purpoſe, God hath concluded them all (*or* ſhut them up) in unbelief, that he might not only puniſh them thereby for their tranſgreſſions, and alſo, through their unbelief, cauſe the gentiles to obtain mercy and ſalvation; but alſo,

alſo, that he might have mercy upon all thoſe whom he had thus ſhut up in unbelief, without exception. See the whole chapter.

Here, then, are three deſigns, worthy of a God of infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, in this one dark diſpenſation, the rejection of the Jewiſh church and nation:---1. That he might puniſh them for their iniquity. 2. That others might come in their room, ſtand in their office, and be made partakers of their privileges: and, 3. That they might be reſerved to mercy and forgiveneſs at laſt. And what happened to a whole nation of traitors, might happen to an individual of that nation; and *vice verſa*.

Friend. This is a ſubject of great importance, and if you can maintain the ſyſtem you have eſpouſed, and anſwer the remaining objections that may be brought againſt it, it will moſt certainly give me pleaſure, and relieve my mind from great anxiety. I am a father of many children, and God knows the tears I have ſhed on their account! but could I receive your views, with what pleaſure ſhould I look upon them!!! But I have many remaining difficulties and objections ſtill to propoſe. May God preſerve me from error and falſe doctrine! I wiſh to know what is really the truth in this matter; for above all things I dread deception.

Miniſter. I aſſure you, my friend, that I ſhould be as loth to deceive you, as you are to be deceived: and had I not the ſureſt confidence, through the Lord, of the truth and reality of this moſt glorious ſyſtem, and did I not find the higheſt ſatisfaction in it myſelf, I ſhould never preſume to hold it forth to others. But as I have an engagement that calls me elſewhere juſt now, I muſt beg you to excuſe me; hoping that in a little time I ſhall have another opportunity of hearing the remainder of your objections; and in the mean time I adviſe you to ſearch the Scriptures, and pray God to lead you into all truth.

END OF THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE III.

Friend. I AM glad to meet with you, to have some farther converſation upon the very important and intereſting ſubject of the final Reſtoration.---Since I ſaw you laſt I have had opportunity of hearing ſome very capital objections made againſt this ſyſtem, which I beg leave to ſtate in the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt manner.

Minister. Your frankneſs is well pleaſing to me, and I am ready to hear whatever can be urged againſt my ſentiments, and will do my endeavour to anſwer all reaſonable objections; therefore propoſe them as ſoon as you think proper.

Friend. One grand objection that is very generally made againſt the doctrine of the Reſtoration is, that it tends to *licentiouſneſs*; that it is the doctrine that the ſerpent preached to Eve; for we read, (Gen. iii. 4.) 'And the ſerpent ſaid unto the woman, Ye ſhall not 'ſurely die:' and that it is a doctrine calculated to give encouragement to the wicked to continue in their evil ways; that it is 'ſaying, Peace, peace, when 'there is no peace;' and that this doctrine is as dangerous as that of the wicked propheteſſes of Ezekiel's time, of whom God ſays, 'With lies ye have made 'the heart of the righteous ſad, whom I have not made 'ſad, and ſtrengthened the hands of the wicked, that 'he ſhould not return from his wicked way, by pro-'miſing him life. They ſay unto them that deſpiſe 'me, Jehovah hath ſaid, Ye ſhall have peace; and 'they ſay unto every one that walketh after the imagin-'ation of his own heart, No evil ſhall come upon you.' 'Jer. viii. 11. Ezek. xiii. 22. Jer. xxiii. 17.

It is ſaid, that it is the nature of God to lay the higheſt poſſible reſtraint upon ſin, and therefore he has threat-

threatened it with eternal, or *endleſs* puniſhment; and this is even found too weak to prevent the prevailing of iniquity. What a flood of impiety, therefore, would overflow the world, if it ſhould be generally believed, that, after ſome ages of ſuffering, mankind ſhould be reſtored to ſome degree of happineſs! Would not the reſtraints be wholly taken off from the luſts and paſſions of the wicked, if once this doctrine ſhould become prevalent? Will you be ſo kind as to give a fair and candid reply to this objection?

Minister. This objection is ſtated with all poſſible force; I ſhall therefore endeavour to anſwer it as well as I can; putting in this caveat, that if I ſhould not anſwer it to your ſatisfaction, do not imagine that no ſolid anſwer can be given; but impute it to my not being ſufficiently maſter of my ſubject, or not being able to expreſs my mind ſo clearly as I could wiſh. As this objection is frequently made, and often uſed, by people who mean well, but have not conſidered the ſubject thoroughly, I ſhall be as explicit as poſſibly I can upon it.

I would firſt obſerve, that the great truths, or firſt principles, upon which the Reſtoration is founded, and from which it is derived by natural and eaſy conſequences, are far from tending to licentiouſneſs: but, in order to make this evident, it will be proper here to ſet them down in their order.

FIRST PRINCIPLES,
Upon which the Doctrine of the Final and Univerſal Reſtitution is founded.

1. God *is the univerſal and only Creator of all*; contrary to the opinion of the *Manichees* of old, who believed the *devil* to be creator of moſt, if not all viſible beings: the *Muggletonians* of the laſt century, and the *Buchanites* lately, aſſert nearly the ſame ſentiments; contrary to Rev. iv. 11. Col. i. 16. Pſalm c. 3. Numb. xvi. 22. Iſaiah, lxiv. 8. Ezek. xviii. 4. Zech. xii. 1. and a vaſt number of other Scriptures.

Now,

Now, who can say, that this noble thought, which St. Paul enlarges upon so beautifully, (Acts, xvii. 24---30.) tends, in the least, to make men wicked? Does it not tend to dignify and ennoble human nature, to be told, that GOD is our Father, Creator, and First Cause; and that we were made by his power, according to his will, and for his pleasure; and that the *chief end* for which he made us, was, *to glorify his name, and enjoy him for ever?*---as the Assembly's Catechism beautifully declares. This is one of the principles from which God himself deduces the certainty of the final end of wrath, as I have observed before :---'For I will 'not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: 'for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls 'which I have made.' Isaiah, lvii. 16.---Those who venture to contradict their Maker, and say, that he *will contend for ever, and be always wroth*, ought to be able, at least, to give as good a reason why *he will*, as he has assigned why *he will not*; and, consequently, prove that he hath *not made all souls*; which is the true foundation upon which endless misery must be founded, and the only doctrine which is perfectly consistent with it.

The poor untutored Indians in America argued (with a missionary that was sent from Sweden to convert them) from the universal providence of God, that he, who was so kind a Father as to provide for their bodies all things needful, had not wholly neglected their souls: but this I do not insist upon, though I think the argument has weight in it; and, certainly, the providential goodness of God, and his long suffering, tends to lead men to repentance. Rom. ii. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

2. *The universal benevolence of the Deity*, or the *love* of God to his creatures, is one of the first principles from which the General Restoration is deduced: and who can say, that this leads to licentiousness? If those who believe that God loves them in particular, find *that* consideration the strongest obligation on them to love him again, and to obey his will; by the same rule, if all the individuals of the whole human race were

were to believe that God loved each one of them, would not the ſame cauſe produce the ſame effect? And if ſo, can this be charged as a licentious doctrine, which is expreſsly grounded upon a cauſe which powerfully operates to produce holineſs? Is there any thing like argument in this reaſoning---I know that God loves me, and ſeeks to do me good, therefore I muſt hate him? What ſhould we think of a woman who ſhould leave her huſband, and do all in her power againſt him, and ſhould be able to give no better reaſon for it than the following---My huſband loves me, and I know it, and he has always loved me, and always will; and therefore I am determined to hate, ridicule, deſpiſe, and contemn him, and have left him for this very cauſe, and am determined never to love or obey him more? Bad as human nature is, I queſtion whether ſuch inſtances often occur. We commonly ſay, that love begets love: 'We love him becauſe he firſt loved us,' ſays the apoſtle. 1 John, iv. 19. Therefore the doctrine of God's univerſal *benevolence*, cannot lead to licentiouſneſs, in any light in which it can be viewed; for, if he really loves us, he will do all in his power to bring us to love him again, and to be like him; and I am ſure the conſideration of his love to us, goes as far as moral ſuaſion can go, to induce us to love him again; nay, the belief of it is acknowledged to be one of the ſtrongeſt motives to obedience; and the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart produces the beſt effects, and is the moſt powerful principle and ſpring of good and virtuous actions, that we are acquainted with. This being a firſt principle, from which the Univerſal Reſtoration is concluded, we are happy to find that 'God 'is love,' and that he 'ſo loved the world, as to give 'his only begotten ſon, that whoſoever believeth in 'him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life: for 'God ſent not his ſon into the world to condemn the 'world, but that the world through him might be 'ſaved.' See 1 John, iv. 16. St. John, iii. 16, 17. But it is not ſo much my buſineſs now to ſhew that the ſentiment is ſcriptural, as to ſhew that it is not of a dangerous

gerous tendency. The following words, however, are so beautiful, that I take the liberty to mention them---'But thou hast mercy upon all; for thou canst do all 'things, and winkest at the sins of men, because they 'should amend. For thou lovest all the things that 'are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made: 'for never wouldest thou have made any thing, if thou 'hadst hated it. And how could any thing have en-'dured, if it had not been thy will; or been preserv-'ed, if not called by thee? But thou sparest all; for 'they are thine, O Lord, thou lover of souls. For 'thine incorruptible spirit is in all things; therefore 'chastenest thou them, by little and little, that offend, 'and warnest them, by putting them in remembrance 'wherein they have offended, that, leaving their wic-'kedness, they may believe on thee, O Lord. For thy 'power is the beginning of righteousness; and because 'thou art the Lord of all, it maketh thee to be gra-'cious unto all. But thou, O God, art gracious and 'true; long suffering, and in mercy ordering all things. 'For if we sin, we are thine, knowing thy power; but '*we will not sin*, knowing that we are counted thine.' Wisdom of Solomon, xi. 23---26. xii. 1, 2, 16. xv. 1, 2. 'JEHOVAH is gracious, and full of compassion, 'slow to anger, and of great mercy. JEHOVAH is good 'to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works. 'All thy works shall praise thee, O JEHOVAH, and thy 'saints shall bless thee.' Psalm cxlv. 8, 9, 10.

3. Another great principle upon which the Restoration depends, is, *that* CHRIST *died for all:* 'We see *Je-'sus*, who was made a little lower than the angels, for 'the suffering of death, crowned with glory and ho-'nour; that he, by the grace of God, should taste 'death for *every man*' (*or* ALL). Heb. ii. 9. 'If *any 'man* sin, we have an advocate with the *Father, Jesus 'Christ* the righteous; and he is the propitiation for 'our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins 'of the *whole world.*' 1 John, ii. 1, 2. 'For there is 'one God, and one *Mediator* between God and *men*, 'the *Man* CHRIST JESUS, who gave himself a ransom

'for

'for *all*, to be teſtified in due time.' 1 Timothy, ii. 5, 6.

I need not multiply paſſages to prove that Chriſt died for *all*; for though the *univerſality* of his *death* is not expreſsly aſſerted in every text where it is mentioned that he died, it muſt always be underſtood; becauſe it is never denied in any place, and is plainly and pointedly declared in thoſe which I have quoted: and, beſides, it is evident, that in the apoſtle's time, the *univerſality* of the death of Chriſt was a firſt principle, univerſally acknowledged, and therefore St. Paul reaſons from it as ſuch; which it would have been highly prepoſterous for him to do, if that had not been the caſe; as, for example—'For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth 'us; becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for *all*,' (which is not diſputed by any, and which we know to be a truth) 'then were *all* dead; and that he died for '*all*, that they who live, ſhould not henceforth live 'unto themſelves, but unto him that died for them, and 'roſe again.' 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Friend. But have you never heard it argued that Chriſt did not *die* for *all*, becauſe he did not *pray* for *all*?

Minister. I remember, when a lad, I was ſent to a neighbour's houſe, and overheard the good man, the maſter of the family, read in a book after this manner: 'Chriſt did not die for *all*, becauſe he did not pray for '*all*: I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but 'for them which thou haſt given me, for they are 'thine.' St. John, xvii. 9. And I then thought the argument concluſive; but I am now at a loſs whether the author of that book meant to deceive his readers, or whether he had never read the chapter through critically; for, had he read the 20th verſe, he would have found theſe words, which would have overthrown his hypotheſis:—'Neither pray I for theſe *alone*, but for 'them *alſo* who ſhall believe on me through their word.' If Chriſt had prayed for all, in the 9th verſe, for whom he died, he could not have enlarged his prayer ſo much in the 20th verſe, as to take in not them only, but all that

that ſhould believe on him through their word: neither does he ſtop here, but goes on to pray for thoſe that believe in theſe words---'That they all may be one, as 'thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they alſo 'may be one in us.' And why is all this unity prayed for among believers? Surely, it hath never been accompliſhed; but it ſhall be, for this great and admirable purpoſe, *viz.* 'That the *world may believe* that thou haſt 'ſent me. And the glory which thou gaveſt me, I 'have given them, that they may be one, even as we 'are one: I in them, and thou in me; that they may 'be made perfect in one, and that the *world may know* 'that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them as thou 'haſt loved me.' Verſes 21, 22, 23.

Friend. But when ſhall the *world believe*, and *know* that Chriſt is the *Sent of God?*

Minister. When all that believe ſhall be *one*, as the *Father* and the *Son* are *one:* when the great marriage of the *Lamb* ſhall be celebrated, and his Bride ſhall be *one*, in the bond of univerſal love and fellowſhip, as the *Father* and *Son* now are: when the church ſhall be perfected in one; ſhall dwell in love and dwell in *God* as the *Father* dwells in the *Son*, and the *Son* in the *Father:* when Zion's watchmen ſhall ſee eye to eye; when all believers ſhall ſpeak the ſame thing; when there ſhall be no more diviſions among them; when they ſhall be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind, and in the ſame judgment.

This was the ſtate that St. Paul beſought the Corinthians to preſs after, and wiſhed them to attain; but he had the mortification to ſee them fall ſhort of it, as all the Chriſtian churches have from that day to this. But when Chriſt ſhall give that glory and honour to his bride, which the *Father* gave to him, and ſhall thus unite her to himſelf, in an indiſſoluble union, and the ſeveral members of his body, the church, ſhall be as much united one to another, as the members of the natural body are; or, to expreſs it in his own words, 'As thou, *Father*, art in *me*, and *I* in *thee*.' When thus the church ſhall be one, in ſpirit, love, deſign, judg-

judgment, &c. as the *Father* and *Son* are; then ſhall the *world believe*, and, believing, have life; then ſhall the *world know* him, whom to know is life eternal: ſee verſes 2 and 3. But as this great *cauſe* has never yet exiſted, the *effect* has not yet followed; but when the *firſt* ſhall be, the *laſt* ſhall take place in conſequence.

The petitions in that moſt excellent prayer, that may, with great propriety, be called the LORD'S Prayer, may be divided into four claſſes. 1. For himſelf, verſes 1ſt and 5th. 2. For his apoſtles, 9---19. 3. For them that ſhould believe, through their word, verſes 20---23. And, 4. For the world, verſes 21, 23., as I have juſt obſerved, and need not add any more upon ſo plain a matter.

FRIEND. Proceed, if you pleaſe, to ſhew that the doctrine of the *univerſality* of the death of Chriſt does not lead to licentiouſneſs.

MINISTER. It is evident that it doth not; but, on the contrary, it is the ſtrongeſt motive to all who believe it, to love and live to him who died for them, and roſe again. We *are not our own, but are bought with a price*; therefore, we are exhorted not to be the ſervants of ſin, ſlaves to our paſſions, and ſervants to men; but to glorify God in our bodies and ſpirits, which are his: and the apoſtle beſeeches us, by the mercies of God, to preſent our bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reaſonable ſervice. Foraſmuch as we know that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold; but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a *Lamb* without blemiſh, and without ſpot. See 2 Cor. v. 15. Rom. vi. 12, 13. 1 Cor. vii. 23. vi. 19, 20. Rom. xii. 1. 1 Peter, i. 18, 19.

What a horrid thought would it be, that Chriſt ſhould be the miniſter of ſin, and that his blood-ſhedding ſhould cauſe wickedneſs to abound! The love of God, in giving his *ſon* to die, is enough to move an heart of ſtone; 'For when we were yet without 'ſtrength, in due time Chriſt died for the ungodly; for, 'ſcarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, perad-

'venture, for a good (kind, benevolent, generous) 'man, some would even dare to die. But God com-'mendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were 'yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more, being now 'justified through his blood, we shall be saved from 'wrath through him. For if when we were enemies, 'we were reconciled to God by the death of his *son*, 'much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by 'his life.' Rom. v. 6---10.

Here the death of the *Lord Jesus* is laid as the ground, and the salvation of men inferred from it, with the greatest possible certainty; yet, will any one say, that because Christ hath died for him, therefore he will indulge himself in sin? God forbid. Some say, that if they believed this doctrine, they would live in sin, and indulge themselves in their lusts and passions; but then it may be observed, that those who say so are its enemies, and those who oppose the view, and not those who receive it.

There is something so brutish and unaccountable in such dispositions, as would lead men to hate their best friends, merely because they are so---that would lead them to hate God, because he loved them---and despise Christ, merely because he died for them, that, for the honour of human nature, I would hope these instances are rare. But to the point---I have conversed with many who believed that Christ died for them in particular, and yet I never heard them say, that they hated him for it; but, on the contrary, that they loved him exceedingly. Now, is not the same cause likely to produce the same effect? If a thousand persons, for instance, all believing that Christ died for them, find their hearts constrained to love him for it, would it not have the same effect upon ten thousand, ten millions, or ten millions of millions? And if it would cause licentiousness to abound in the world, to preach that Christ died for all, if it was universally believed; by the same rule, it must cause it to prevail, in a lesser degree, to preach, that he died for a small part, at least, among those who believe themselves to be of the

the number; and, therefore, it must not be preached at all, that he died for any---Who can deny the consequence? It seems to be evident, that Christ has done and suffered too much for those that he died for, to lose them finally: and thus the Universal Restoration stands connected necessarily with the universality of the death of Christ, and is deduced therefrom, in the easiest manner; therefore, the doctrine of the *former* cannot tend to licentiousness, as it stands upon the ground of the *latter*, which hath been demonstrated to have no such tendency.

4. Another principle upon which the Universal doctrine depends, is, *the unchangeableness of God*. Whom he loves once, he always loves; he loved his creatures when he made them, as none can well deny; their sins he never loved, nor ever will; he hath declared, that he loved us when sinners, but never *as* sinners. His eternal and constant hatred of all sin, and his unchangeable love of all his creatures, are of the nature of primary truths, from which the doctrine of the general Restoration may be easily and plainly inferred. In this view we may understand those many dreadful threatenings and gracious promises, made to the same people and persons: both shall be fulfilled; the first while they continue as rebels, which are designed to humble and subdue them; the last, when they shall have accepted of the punishment of their iniquity; when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, when their stubborn knees shall bow to JEHOVAH, and their former rebellious tongues shall swear allegiance to him.

Does this idea lead to licentiousness, that God hates sin, and determines to pursue it to entire destruction, and never to put up his sword, so long as there is a rebel in the universe; yet, at the same time, has no positive hatred to the souls which he has made, but only wishes them to return to order? This idea appears to me equally to check presumption and despair; and tends to put an end to licentiousness rather than to encourage it: for if rebels are assured that their rightful sovereign hates them, and will never suffer them to be

reconciled to him, it naturally cauſes them to fight with tenfold rage, as all warriors will teſtify; as, on the other hand, if they believe he is too weak, or undetermined, to conquer them, they will be preſumptuous, and continue the war. It cannot, therefore, be affirmed, by any perſons of reaſon, that the declaration that God will deſtroy ſin, tends to promote it; or, that his love of order, and hatred of evil, being compatible with his love to the creatures he has made, is a doctrine that encourages men to rebel; the contrary is evident: and yet theſe are the very grounds of the Univerſal Reſtoration; which cannot, therefore, be licentious.

5. Another of the firſt principles of the Reſtoration, is, the *immutability of* God's *counſels*; which he hath confirmed by an oath, 'That by two immutable things, '(*viz.* his word and oath) in which it was impoſſible 'for God to lie, we might have a ſtrong conſolation, 'who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope 'ſet before us.' Heb. vi. 17, 18. 'God hath abound-'ed toward us in all wiſdom and prudence, having 'made known unto us the myſtery of his will, accord-'ing to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in 'himſelf; that, in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of 'times, he might gather together (*or* rehead) in one*,

* The word ανακεφαλαιωσασθαι, *anakephalaioſaſthai*, ſignifies to re-collect, and arrange under one head, as ſcattered ſoldiers under a general. It ſeems to me that the apoſtle has reference to the original and primary headſhip of the ſon of God, before the entrance of ſin into the creation. The Greek κεφαλη, *kephale*, anſwering to the Hebrew ראש *raſh*, *the beginning*, *the head*—Chriſt being the beginning, the head of all the ways of God. Gen. i. 1. Prov. viii. 22.

And in the New Teſtament the Apoſtles ſay,

'Chriſt is the *head* of the church.'

'The *head* of every man is Chriſt.'

'Chriſt is the *head* of all principality and power.'

Sin has ſevered and ſcattered a great part of the creatures from the ſon of God; but by virtue of his primary and original headſhip, he came 'to ſeek and to ſave (reſtore) that which was loſt.' Hence the apoſtle's idea of *reheading* all things, whether in heaven or in earth, in Chriſt Jeſus. All things could not be *reheaded* in Chriſt unleſs he had been the original head of them prior to their defection by ſin.

'all

'all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and 'which are on earth, even in him; in whom we have 'obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated accord-'ing to the purpoſe of him who worketh *all things* 'according to the counſel of his own WILL.' Epheſ. i. 8---11. 'God is our ſaviour,' or (σωτηρ, *ſoteros*,) reſtorer, 'who will have all men to be ſaved, (σωθηναι, '*ſothenai*, reſtored) and to come unto the knowledge of 'the truth. 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4. This is the will and counſel of that God, who 'doeth according to his will in 'the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of 'the earth; and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto 'him, What doeſt thou?' Dan. iv. 35. He hath ſworn by himſelf, the word is gone out of his mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, 'that unto him every knee 'ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall ſwear.' Iſaiah, xlv. 23. The counſel of God ſhall ſtand; he will perform his pleaſure, notwithſtanding all the oppoſition that men can make: 'God is not a man, that he ſhould lie, 'neither the ſon of man that he ſhould repent: hath 'he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? or, hath he ſpoken, 'and ſhall he not make it good?' Numb. xxiii. 19. If God will have all men to be ſaved, or reſtored, and to come to the knowledge of the truth---if it is his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf, in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, to rehead all things in Chriſt, both in heaven and on earth---if he hath ſworn, that unto him every knee ſhall bow, and every tongue ſhall ſwear---and if he worketh all things after the counſel of his own will, and is determined to perform all his pleaſure, which he is able to do; and with him nothing that he pleaſes is impoſſible; I ſay, if all theſe things are true, (as who, that believes the Scriptures, can deny?) then, is not the doctrine of the Reſtoration true? And who will venture to charge that with licentiouſneſs which God, in the counſel of his will, hath purpoſed, and is determined to perform? We know the will of God is a will to all goodneſs, and that he cannot do any thing unjuſt, or contrary to his holy nature, or inconſiſtent with his plan of moral go-

vernment, or that ſhall tend to promote rebellion; therefore, if God had ſeen that this great work had been, in any reſpect, injurious to his perfections, character, government, &c. he would not have propoſed it; and if he had foreſeen that the knowledge of it would have been hurtful to mankind, he would not have revealed it: but ſince he hath done both, we may certainly argue, that it is not a licentious doctrine to declare, that God will finally make all his intelligent creatures happy, by making them all his ſubjects, by deſtroying their ſins, and making them holy, in a way perfectly conſiſtent with all his perfections and attributes; without doing the leaſt injury to his character, or rendering his moral government weak, or making any of his words void, whether threatenings or promiſes, or in the leaſt ſetting aſide the ſanctions of his law or goſpel, or a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments; without derogating at all from the glory of the Mediator, but rather exalting it to the higheſt poſſible pitch; without ſaddening the hearts of the righteous, or diminiſhing, in the leaſt, from the happineſs of heaven, but rather cauſing it to increaſe; for if there is joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, there muſt be more over many, in exact proportion; and as God will certainly give the greateſt poſſible joy to his choſen, and there is no doubt but it will receive addition from every one that is reſtored, or brought home to himſelf; therefore it can only be brought to its higheſt poſſible pitch by the *Univerſal Reſtoration*; which doctrine cannot, therefore, be licentious, as God has appointed and revealed it, and all holy beings (except ſome weak good men on earth) rejoice therein exceedingly.

6. Another of the principles on which the *general Reſtoration* is founded, is, *that* God *hath given all things into the hand of* Chriſt, who hath declared, *that it is the Father's will, that of all that he gave him, he ſhould loſe nothing:* and that power was given him over all, that he ſhould give the knowledge of God, even eternal life, to all that the *Father* had given him; and that *all,*

all, without exception, whom the *Father* hath given, ſhall come in ſuch a manner as not to be caſt out: but as all theſe Scriptures have been recited, and reaſoned upon before, I ſhall only now obſerve, that as God the Father hath given *all* things to Chriſt, and as he hath engaged to bring *all* back, without exception, and hath both *will* and *power* to perform this work, and came into the world on purpoſe to accompliſh it, it muſt, of conſequence, be finally performed; yet, it cannot tend to licentiouſneſs, or the God of Heaven, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, would never have planned it, approved of it, or ſought to execute it.

Many more firſt principles, on which the doctrine of the Reſtoration is founded, might be mentioned, and ſhewn to be far from tending to licentiouſneſs; but I ſhall mention only one more, and that is, *The Scriptures muſt be fulfilled: the Scriptures cannot be broken*---none of the words of God can fail of being accompliſhed; and he hath not only denounced dreadful threatenings, but made many gracious promiſes to the ſame people: theſe cannot be fulfilled together; and, if there is no truth in the Reſtoration, I cannot ſee how the *latter* will ever be fulfilled at all; and if ſins are not puniſhed in the perſons who commit them, I am equally at a loſs what ſenſe or truth there can be in the *former*. It would be a great taſk to collect all the texts which juſtify the remark, that threatenings and promiſes belong to the ſame people in different periods, ſome ſpecimens of which have been given in the courſe of theſe dialogues. Now, it cannot lead to licentiouſneſs to ſuppoſe that the Scriptures ſhall all be fulfilled; but it muſt lead to infidelity, and all kinds of evil, to ſuppoſe the contrary.

Theſe are the firſt principles upon which the doctrine of the Reſtoration ſtands, and by which it is ſupported; and as theſe have all been conſidered, and proved to have no tendency to encourage ſin, ſeparately, much leſs can they have any ſuch tendency jointly; and then it evidently follows, that a doctrine which ſeems neceſſarily deduced or inferred, by undeniable

deniable conſequences, from all theſe conſiderations united, cannot be falſe, or have any evil tendency.

But I ſhall next proceed to ſhew, that all true, experimental, and practical religion, ſeems ſo conſiſtent with the *univerſal Reſtoration*, that it may be reckoned a wonder, that all who have taſted that the Lord is gracious, and have diligently practiſed his commands, have not, in all ages, been fully convinced of the truth of it.

Friend. Is it poſſible that you can do this? If ſo, I hope your reaſoning will be attended to; and I muſt confeſs, that you have cleared your way ſo well, by conſidering the firſt principles of the doctrine, and ſhewing that they are very far from tending to licentiouſneſs, that I am half inclined to think you will be able to anſwer this objection, formidable as it has been conſidered hitherto.

Minister. As I truſt you have been made acquainted with experimental religion, I need only to appeal to your own experience, for the truth of what I advance; and I am apt to think, if you will anſwer me candidly to a few queſtions, you muſt acknowledge either that the Reſtoration is true, or that your experience is falſe.

Friend. I am willing to give you as plain and candid anſwers as I can; for it will be of no uſe to deny what the Lord has done for my ſoul.

Minister. Let me then aſk you, in the firſt place, Did you not ſee yourſelf loſt and undone, and that you were vile before God, unworthy of his mercy, and totally unable to deliver yourſelf from your ſin and miſery?

Friend. I certainly did; and I was ſometimes ready to think there was hardly ſuch a ſinner on earth as myſelf, all circumſtances conſidered; for I had ſinned againſt ſuch light and love, that I thought all the world might be forgiven ſooner than myſelf.

Minister. And were you not brought by the power of God to reſign yourſelf into his hands, without reſerve, to do with you, and diſpoſe of you, according to

to his will and pleasure; being convinced, that he neither would nor could do you any injustice?

Friend. O yes; and then I found peace; my rebellion against God ceased; I looked upon him quite different from what I did before; I saw that he was wholly right and just, and that I was entirely to blame: my murmurings against him ceased; I viewed him as such a holy, good, merciful, and yet righteous God, that I could trust my soul in his hands with the most entire satisfaction.

Minister. And when *Christ* was revealed to you as a *Saviour*, how did he appear?

Friend. As one able and mighty to save, even to the uttermost; and I thought there was not only a sufficiency in him for me, the vilest of all, but for the whole world, yea, for a thousand worlds, had there been so many. His blood seemed to me so precious, his obedience and sufferings so meritorious, his power so great, his love so rich, boundless, and free, that I was overcome with the transporting view; and as I saw in him a fulness for all, so I found in him an infinite willingness to save all; for how could I think otherwise? I knew myself to be most unworthy, and that he had graciously pitied me: I beheld his love, like a river, flowing down to me as free as water; and I was amazed that I had not beheld it before in the same light. I saw, that the love of God to me did not now *begin*, but was now *manifested* to my soul. I saw that there was no change in God, but all in myself. Those words were precious to my heart at that time---'Yea, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore 'with loving kindness have I drawn thee.' Jer. xxxi. 3. As also these---'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins 'be forgiven thee.' St. Matth. ix. 2.

Minister. You have brought my own experience to my mind.---It pleased God, by an incident too trifling to mention, to bring me to seek earnestly for an unfading treasure; and, by a train of circumstances, fixed the concern deeply upon my mind; and I laboured night and day, but could obtain no rest, till one morning---

ing---a time never to be forgotten!---as I was walking on a journey, under great diſtreſs, and when deliverance ſeemed farther from me than ever, all at once I was brought to reſign my ſoul into the hands of God, and thus I expreſſed myſelf---' Lord, here I am, a poor ' helpleſs ſinner; I reſign myſelf into thine hands; ' take me, and deal with me juſt as thou pleaſeſt: I ' know thou canſt do me no injuſtice.' Immediately theſe words came into my mind with great power and ſweetneſs---' In an acceptable time have I heard thee; ' and in a day of ſalvation have I helped thee.' Iſaiah, xlix. 8. And I had then ſuch a view of Chriſt, as made me to cry out, ' Glory to God in the higheſt! This is ſalvation; I know this is ſalvation!' Then thoſe paſſages which you have mentioned came into my mind with great energy; and I ſaw the fulneſs, ſufficiency, and willingneſs of Chriſt to ſave me, and all men, in ſuch a manner, as conſtrained me to venture my ſoul into his arms; and if I had had ten thouſand ſouls, I could have truſted them all in his hands. And O, how did I long, that every ſoul of Adam's race might come to know the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus! And I thought I could not be willing to live any longer on earth, unleſs it might pleaſe God to make me uſeful to my fellow-creatures.

This is a little abſtract of what God did then graciouſly teach me by his ſpirit; but I had been brought up in the particular ſyſtem, and in the courſe of a few years came to be ſo firmly attached to it, as to refuſe, in my preaching, to make general invitations to mankind at large; rightly reaſoning with myſelf, that if proviſion was only made for a ſmall part, I had no warrant to call or invite the whole to come and partake; and therefore only preſſed the duty on ſuch and ſuch characters, as *hungry*, *thirſty*, *weary*, *heavy laden*, ſuch as were *without money*, *ſenſible ſinners*, &c. all of which I concluded to be of the *elect*, becauſe I judged the ſpirit had begun to operate ſavingly upon their hearts; and that to theſe, and theſe only, the Scriptures directed invitations to be made; never conſidering

that

that text---' Hearken unto me, ye ſtout-hearted, that ' are far from righteouſneſs. I bring near my righte- ' ouſneſs; and it ſhall not be far off, and my ſalvation ' ſhall not tarry.' Iſaiah, xlvi. 12, 13. During the time that I remained in this cloſe-hearted ſyſtem, labouring with all my might to maintain it, I chanced to come to a houſe, where, as far as I can judge, was a very ſenſible and pious young woman, whom I never ſaw before or ſince: ſhe gave a very judicious account of the work of grace upon her heart; but when ſhe came to that part, where ſhe ſaid ſhe beheld an infinite fulneſs in Chriſt for ALL the world, I interrupted her, and told her that could not be; for there was no proviſion made for all, and therefore it was impoſſible that ſhe could have any ſuch diſcoveries made to her by the ſpirit of God. This I inſiſted upon, according to my ſyſtem, contrary to my experimental knowledge; (O the miſchiefs of bigotry, prejudice, and vain attachment to ſyſtem!) ſhe, on the contrary, maintained, that ſhe clearly viewed matters in that light; and that ſhe certainly was taught to believe, that in Chriſt there was a fulneſs and freeneſs for all: this I denied; and ſhe was thereby prevented from finiſhing what ſhe had begun. I can never forgive myſelf, for the oppoſition I made to what I knew to be truth by experience; and as I did not enquire the name of the perſon, I have had no opportunity of making a recantation by letter, as I ought to have done; and having never been in the place ſince, and it being highly improbable that ever I ſhall again, I feel myſelf extremely hurt, whenever I think of it.

Friend. I can but admire the agreement between us in matters of experience; for I found the ſame diſpoſitions of mind that you mentioned, when it pleaſed God to reveal his ſon in me.

Minister. I never found an experienced Chriſtian in my life, but would give much the ſame account, provided that his ſyſtem was not in ſight; and I have found ſome, that though they were violently attached to the contrary ſyſtem, and knew my intention in aſking

ing the queſtions; yet anſwered the following affirmatively.

Did you not ſee and feel yourſelves the vileſt of ſinners?

Did you not view the love of God infinitely full, free and unmerited?

Did you not behold in Chriſt an infinite fulneſs, ſufficiency, and willingneſs, to ſave all, without exception?

Did you not love all, and wiſh that all might come and partake of his grace?

Did you not earneſtly deſire the ſalvation of all, not only of your family, friends, neighbours, and nation; but alſo of your enemies, and of all mankind? Could you not embrace the whole human race in the arms of benevolence?

Did you not find it in your heart to pray for the ſalvation of all mankind, as for your own?

If you had as much power as good-will, would you not bring all to bow to the ſceptre of grace, and to be reconciled to God through Jeſus Chriſt?

Friend. I do not ſee how an experienced perſon can refuſe to ſay Yes, to all theſe queſtions; they are ſo agreeable to the very tempers of the new-born ſoul; and I am ſure, I found them in my heart, at the very time when I firſt taſted of the love of God.

Miniſter. Well then, my friend, let me aſk you, From whence did theſe tempers and diſpoſitions proceed?

Friend. To be candid, I think they were given me from above, and came down from the Father of lights, from whence every good and perfect gift cometh; and I am the more apt to think ſo, becauſe I found contrary diſpoſitions in my heart before; and the more I am ſenſible of the forgiving love of God, the more I find theſe affections which you have deſcribed, and theſe deſires for the good of others.

Miniſter. Then let me aſk you, Can a ſmall drop be larger than the unfathomed abyſs and ocean of love? Have you more compaſſion towards your fellow

low creatures than the God that made them? Can any effect be greater than its cause? Would you bring all to submit to God and be happy, if you could, and will not he, to whom nothing that he pleases to do is impossible, bring all his creatures to be reconciled to himself at last? He has infinitely more love to his creatures than all the saints and angels in glory have: he is possessed of infinite power and wisdom, as well as love; all means to accomplish the work are known to him: he can do it in a way that shall cause his praise to abound exceedingly; in a way perfectly consistent with all his perfections, and the whole of his glorious character; it is his will and purpose so to do, as has been proved at large; what then can hinder him from fulfilling it?

Friend. I am not able to gainsay this reasoning; it seems almost undeniable: but can you shew that the doctrine of the Restoration stands connected with practical religion, or the keeping of the commandments of God?

Minister. I can very easily do that, in every instance; but shall only attend to the following as a specimen.---

1. Our Lord has commanded us to *love all mankind*; not our brethren and friends only, but even our greatest enemies; and all for this purpose, that we may be the children of our Father who is in heaven, whose love is universal, and whose tender mercies are over all his works. See St. Matth. v. 44---48. St. Luke, vi. 27---36. But if God doth not love all himself, Christ hath commanded us to be *more perfect*, in that respect, than our Father, who is in Heaven; which, to suppose, is highly absurd. What shall we say to that doctrine which teaches us, that God hates, with a perfect hatred, many of those whom he hath commanded us to love as ourselves?

Therefore, there is nothing in the doctrine of the Restoration, opposite to the love of your neighbour; which, on the contrary, is promoted thereby.

2. We are commanded to *do good to all men*, as we have opportunity. This is recommended to us by the example of our heavenly Father, who 'maketh his 'fun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth 'rain on the juſt, and on the unjuſt;' and no perſon can ſay, that the belief of this doctrine tends, in the leaſt, to hinder us from doing good to all our fellow-creatures; but rather encourages us ſo to do, from the conſideration that God loves them all, and does good to all, and is determined to make them all the ſubjects of his kingdom at laſt.

3. We are commanded to *forgive all men their treſpaſſes*, and to pray, ſaying, 'Forgive us our (debts, '*or*) treſpaſſes, as we forgive (our debtors, *or*) them 'that treſpaſs againſt us.' St. Matth. vi. 12. St. Luke, xi. 4. And our Lord ſays, 'For if ye forgive men 'their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive 'you: but if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, nei-'ther will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes.' St. Matth. vi. 14, 15.; ſee alſo chap. xviii. 21---35. St. Mark, xi. 25, 26. St. Luke, vi. 37.

Now, is it poſſible to ſuppoſe, with any degree of reaſon, that our Lord would command us, upon pain of his higheſt diſpleaſure, to *forgive* thoſe whom he hated, and determined to puniſh while he ſhould exiſt, without having the leaſt deſire or deſign to do them good? Has he promiſed us the greateſt bleſſings if we will forgive all men, and will he never forgive them? He that can believe this, let him believe it. However, ſince forgiving all men is a plain command, which none can deny, I truſt no one will venture to ſay, that believing the final Reſtoration of all men, at laſt, will have any tendency to make us break this precept of our Saviour's, upon which he lays ſo much ſtreſs: but, I think, the contrary is evident.

4. We are commanded to *pray for all men*. St. Paul ſays, 'I exhort, therefore, that, firſt of all, ſupplica-'tions, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks, be 'made for all men---for this is good and acceptable in 'the ſight of God our Saviour, (*or* Reſtorer) who will

'will have all men to be saved, (*or* restored) and to 'come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is 'one God, and one Mediator between God and men, 'the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for 'all, to be testified in due time.' This is the great doctrine of the gospel, the very foundation of Christianity; 'whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an 'apostle; (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not) a 'teacher of the gentiles in faith and verity.' The apostle not only believed, but taught; not only taught, but commanded others to teach and preach this great doctrine of God's being the Saviour, or Restorer, of all men. In this he gloried, saying, 'This is a faith-'ful saying, and worthy of all acceptation; for there-'fore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we 'trust in the living God, who is the Saviour (*or* Re-'storer) of all men, specially of those that that believe, 'These things command and teach.'

Upon this grand foundation, St. Paul recommends prayer to all men, saying, 'I will therefore, that men 'pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without 'wrath and doubting.' 1 Tim. ii. 1---8. iv. 9---11.

Observe, the apostle recommends prayer for all men: and wills, that men should pray every where, at all times, and in all places, lifting up holy hands, without *wrath* and *doubting* *. How nearly forgiving all men, and

* When we consider the state of Jews and Gentiles, we shall understand this command of the apostle to pray for the restoration of all men 'without wrath and doubting.' The *Jews* could not bear the thought that God should extend his mercy to the gentiles; the very mentioning of it always produced *wrath* in them. See Acts, xxii. 21, 22. 1 Thes. ii. 16. This disposition in them arose partly from spiritual pride, as though they had a claim upon the divine goodness which the gentiles had not; contrary to the testimony of Moses concerning them, which was confirmed by all their after conduct; Deut. ix. 6--29; and partly from a wrong view of the Divine conduct, which they had interpreted as a system of *favouritism* and *partiality*: contrary to the declarations of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; which were, that in their *seed* (the Messiah) all the nations and families of the earth were to be blessed. Gen. xii. 3. xxvi. 4.

and praying for all men, ſtand connected! and both are plainly and peremptorily commanded by our Lord, who ſays, 'Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe 'you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for 'them which deſpitely uſe you, and perſecute you.'

We are commanded to pray for all men, becauſe it is the will of God that all men ſhould be ſaved; (*or* reſtored) and becauſe Chriſt hath given himſelf a ranſom for all: and we are bid to pray *without doubting*. O what a word is this! May we, ought we, to pray for the ſalvation of all men, without *doubting?* Surely, God would never have commanded us to do this, unleſs it was his purpoſe to reſtore all men, in his own time; and no man can ſay, that the belief of the Reſtoration will prevent our praying for all men.

I was once on a journey, and called in at the houſe of one of my former good friends: ſeveral religious perſons were there; and, after ſome time, my ſentiments came to be ſpoken of, and they ſeemed to wonder how I could embrace the opinion, that all men, finally, would be ſaved! I told them, however many might preach againſt it, that no perſon, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, could pray *againſt it*, but, on the contrary, we could pray *for it* in faith, nothing wavering, as God had commanded, and as his Spirit naturally inſpired; that no perſon could pray God not to ſave or reſtore all mankind, without being ſhocked at the blaſphemy and impiety of ſuch a prayer; but that our Lord had ſaid, that all things whatſoever we aſked in prayer, believing that we ſhould receive,

As for the *gentiles*, when they came to be enlightened, and ſaw the enormity of their former conduct, (ſee 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) it was natural for them to *doubt* of the extent of Divine mercy, eſpecially as the Jews called them *dogs*, and *things of nought*. In oppoſition to both theſe diſpoſitions, the apoſtle commands that we make prayers, ſupplications, interceſſions, and giving of thanks for *all* men, on the ground that God will have all men to be σωθηναι, *ſothenai*, reſtored. 1 Tim. ii. 8. Whether the *wrath* of ſome profeſſors in our day, and the *doubting* of others, reſpecting the final extent of Divine mercy proceeds from the ſame cauſes, I ſhall leave others to determine

ſhould

ſhould be granted, let them be things ſeemingly ever ſo impoſſible; that if we aſked any thing according to his will it ſhould be done; and that it was his poſitive and declared will, that all men ſhould be ſaved or reſtored, and come to the knowledge of the truth: that we were ordered to pray for it in faith, without doubting; and therefore, it was as evident as the nature of things required, that it would be done; ſince God had never ordered us to pray for any thing that he was not able and willing to do. This, and much more, I ſaid, and they ſeemed exceedingly well ſatisfied; eſpecially when I informed them, that it was through the blood of Chriſt, the blood of the covenant, that the priſoners ſhould be ſent forth out of the pit wherein is no water; and that all ſhould be reſtored through his mediation.

Friend. Then you hold that even the damned ſhall be finally reſtored and delivered by the power of Jeſus, and through his blood-ſhedding. I have heard it objected to your ſcheme, that it tended to ſet at nought the whole mediatorial plan, and to depreciate the blood of Jeſus, which he ſhed to purge our ſins away; though I never obſerved any thing like this in your diſcourſes, either in public or in private.

Minister. No; God forbid that I ſhould ſet aſide the blood that cleanſeth from all ſin; nor can I be charged with it, unleſs having a much higher idea of its merits than my oppoſers may be looked upon as tending to depreciate it. They hold, that it ſhall cleanſe a ſmall number from their ſins; I believe that it ſhall cleanſe, heal, and reſtore the whole human race. They believe that its virtue endures for a little ſeaſon; I maintain that it ſhall continue to all ages---until all evil ſhall be deſtroyed out of the univerſe.

Friend. I am ſatisfied that you do not mean to ſet at nought the powerful blood of the dear Redeemer, but, on the contrary, you ſuppoſe that your views tend more to exalt it. Pray proceed in your diſcourſe.

Minister. I need not ſay much more upon this matter: our Saviour has ſaid, 'If any man will do his

'(the Father's) will, he shall know of the doctrine, 'whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.' St. John, vii. 17. This is the surest rule; practice religion; love, revere, and serve God; love all men, even your enemies; do good to all, forgive all, pray for all, and then ask, Is the doctrine of the final Restoration contrary to this manner of life? If it be, reject it, for these commands are plain: and if these principles are inconsistent with the observation of these precepts, then avoid them as you would death and hell. But I trust it has been shewn that they have no such tendency; but the contrary. For instance, Does this doctrine tend to make us hate God, and his character? Does it naturally fill our minds with *selfishness*, and prevent *benevolence* from ruling within us? Does it fill us with *pride*, and cause us to look down with contempt upon those that are beneath us in life, and banish *humility* from our hearts? Does the belief of this cause our breasts to swell with pale *envy*, and rancorous malice, at the happiness of others? Does it cause us to burn with hellish *rage*, fury, and madness against mankind? Does it tend to destroy *meekness*, and increase *wrath*? If these questions require (either from the nature of things, or from known facts) the answers to be in the affirmative, then I would abhor such a system, and wish it to be universally detested; but if, on the contrary, the candid enquirer must answer in the negative, and say, that the doctrine of the final Restoration does not tend to produce *selfishness*, *envy*, *pride*, or *wrath*, but, on the contrary, 'Glory to God in the highest, and 'on earth peace, good-will towards men;' that it causes *benevolence*, *meekness*, *humility*, *forbearance*, *forgiveness*, *charity*, and all *goodness*, to abound and increase, then it cannot be a licentious doctrine, and is not to be discarded on that account; for it is a maxim with St. John, that 'He that loveth his brother abid-'eth in the light, and there is none occasion of stum-'bling in him;' (1 John, ii. 10.) that is, he cannot receive, hold, maintain, or do any thing essentially or materially wrong, and therefore can give no just occa-

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sion of offence: 'For all the law is fulfilled in one 'word, even in this---Thou shalt love thy neighbour 'as thyself. For he that loveth another, hath fulfilled 'the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, 'Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou 'shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; 'and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly 'comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy 'neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his 'neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.' Gal. v. 14. Rom. xiii. 8---10.

But it is not only from reasoning, but from facts, that I am able to prove that the belief of the doctrine of the Universal Restoration does not lead men to sin. The Tunkers, or German Baptists, in Pennsylvania and the states adjacent, who take the Scriptures as their only guide, in matters both of faith and practice, have always (as far as I know) received, and universally, at present, hold these sentiments: but such Christians I have never seen as they are; so averse are they to all sin, and to many things that other Christians esteem lawful, that they not only refuse to swear, go to war, &c. but are so afraid of doing any thing contrary to the commands of Christ, that no temptation would prevail upon them even to sue any person at law, for either name, character, estate, or any debt, be it ever so just: they are industrious, sober, temperate, kind, charitable people, envying not the great, nor despising the mean: they read much, they sing and pray much, they are constant attendants upon the worship of God; their dwelling-houses are all houses of prayer: they walk in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, both in public and private: they bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: no noise of rudeness, shameless mirth, loud vain laughter, is heard within their doors: the law of kindness is in their mouths; no fourness, or moroseness, disgraces their religion; and whatsoever they believe their Saviour commands, they practise, without enquiring or regarding what others do.

I remem-

I remember the Rev. Morgan Edwards, formerly minister of the Baptist Church in Philadelphia, once said to me, 'God always will have a visible people on 'earth; and these are his people at present, above 'any other in the world.' And in his History of the Baptists in Pennsylvania, speaking of these people, he says, 'General redemption they certainly hold, and, 'withal, general salvation; which tenets, though 'wrong, are consistent. In a word, they are meek 'and pious Christians; and have justly acquired the 'character of *The harmless Tunkers*.'

Thus have I proved that this doctrine is not licentious; both from the first principles on which it is founded---from the nature of experimental and practical religion---and from facts. As to that part of the objection which supposes this doctrine to be the same that the serpent preached to Eve, saying, 'Ye shall not 'surely die;' it seems almost unworthy of notice: but as it has been gloried in by some writers, as unanswerable, merely because it was passed over unnoticed, as being nothing to the purpose, I shall make a few remarks upon it.

1. I say, that Satan was a liar, and God was true; for man and woman did *die*, in a *moral* sense, on the very day that they sinned; they became dead in trespasses and sins; they lost the divine life, and became earthly, sensual, devilish; darkness in their understandings, stubbornness in their wills, and disorder in their affections, rendered them unfit, unable, and unworthy to have fellowship with their God. But do they contradict JEHOVAH, and join with the serpent, who assert, that JESUS, the second Adam, hath quickened, and is able to quicken, those who were dead in trespasses and sins? If so, St. Paul joined with the serpent in Ephes. ii. 1.

2. The sentence of death was pronounced upon man, even the death of the body, in those words:--- 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till 'thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou 'taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt 'return.'

'return.' Gen. iii. 19, But would it be juſt and right for any one to ſay, that thoſe who believed the reſurrection of the body, contradicted God, and, joining with the ſerpent, declared that men ſhould not die, merely becauſe they aſſerted, according to the promiſes, that they ſhould riſe again? Would not thoſe who preach Jeſus and the reſurrection, have a right to look upon it as a vile and wilful ſlander, if any one ſhould ſo miſrepreſent the matter? What! muſt I be accuſed of ſaying, that no man ever died, becauſe I believe and teach that ſome have riſen, and that all ſhall be raiſed at laſt; when even the very idea of a reſurrection preſuppoſes a ſtate of death?

3. I confeſs, that God has threatened ſinners with the ſecond death: but do I ſay, that they ſhall never taſte of the ſecond death, becauſe I declare that the time will come when it ſhall exiſt no more? This is curious reaſoning indeed. As well may I ſay, that no man ever lived on earth, becauſe ſo many have died; that no one ſleeps in the night who wakes in the morning; or that no fiſh was ever in the water that was caught and taken out.

Did St. Paul join with the ſerpent, when he ſaid, 'For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all 'be made alive?' 1 Cor. xv. 22. Will any ſuppoſe that we affirm that the dreadful threatenings denounced by God, never were, nor ever will be executed, becauſe we declare that his promiſes ſhall alſo be fulfilled? Can any reaſonable man ſuppoſe, becauſe Chriſt is the ſaviour of men, that therefore they were not in a loſt condition? How abſurd! when he declares that he came to ſeek and to ſave the loſt!

Thus, though mankind died a moral death in the day wherein they ſinned, yet Chriſt is able to quicken and raiſe them up from the ſame: and though their bodies die, in conſequence of the fall, yet ſhall he cauſe all that are in the graves to hear his voice, and come forth: and, by the ſame rule of arguing, though many ſhall fall under the power of the ſecond death, which is threatened to ſinners, yet, as he has promiſed

to deſtroy all that bears the name of *death*, their Reſtoration may be fairly concluded, without either contradicting God, or joining with the ſerpent. Had the Scriptures, indeed, contained nothing but threatenings of *death*, without any promiſes of *ſalvation*, *reſurrection*, or *reſtoration*, it would have been preſumptuous for us to have entertained any hopes for the human race, or their deliverance either from *ſin*, *death*, or *hell:* but ſince *promiſes* are found, as well as *threatenings*, we muſt not, under pretence or colour of believing the *latter*, reject the *former*, leſt we are found contradictors and oppoſers of God; for it is as poſſible that we may make him a liar, in refuſing to believe the record he has given of his ſon, and his intentions of grace and mercy towards mankind, as in diſregarding his threatenings, denounced againſt them becauſe of their ſins.

As for this doctrine making the *hearts of the righteous ſad, whom God would not have made ſad*, nothing can be more contrary to fact; for if it be the will of God to reward and puniſh, and finally to reſtore mankind, none of the righteous will be ſorry, but, on the contrary, will greatly rejoice. It is not God's truth, but women's lies, of which the prophet ſpeaks, which made the hearts of the righteous ſad, and ſtrengthened the hands of the wicked, that he ſhould not return from his wicked way, by promiſing him life: but we are ſo far from ſtrengthening the hands of the wicked, and ſaying that no evil ſhould come upon them, that we declare from the Scripture, that 'the wrath of 'God is revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs 'and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in 'unrighteouſneſs; unto them that are contentious, 'and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, 'indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh, upon 'every ſoul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew firſt, 'and alſo of the gentile.' Rom. i. 18. ii. 8, 9. And that 'there is no peace to the wicked.' Iſaiah, xlviii. 22. lvii. 20, 21. Therefore they are called to repent, and turn to God; for in ſin they never can be happy: no unholy or unclean thing can enter into the kingdom

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of heaven. And so far are we from promising them life in their wicked ways, that we testify from the Scripture that 'He that believeth not the son, shall 'not see life,' while he continues in that state; but 'the wrath of God abideth on him.' St. John. iii. 36.

Friend. I had intended to propose that text as an objection to your system; but I see how you will answer it---that the unbeliever, as such, *and while he so continues*, cannot see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him, while he remaineth in unbelief; but that God can take away the cause, in his own time, and then the effect shall cease.

Minister. Certainly, this must be the meaning: for St. John only meant to describe the difference between believers and unbelievers, *as such*; but could not mean to intimate, that those who were unbelievers in his time should always continue so.

But I now pass to consider the latter part of this objection, upon which I have dwelt so long, *viz.* that it is the nature of God to lay the highest possible restraint upon sin, and therefore, he has threatened it with *everlasting damnation*, which must intend *endless misery*; and as this restraint is found too weak, wholly to prevent evil, what an amazing increase would there be, if this restraint should be taken off, in any degree; as it must be, if it should come to be known, that punishments were only *for certain ages or periods*, and designed for the *amendment* of the sufferers?

I once asked a reverend divine what was his strongest argument in favour of *endless punishment?* and he told me, this which is mentioned above; and therefore, as it is of considerable importance, I shall give it a brief consideration.

1. It is not quite clear to me, that it is the nature of God to lay the highest possible restraint upon sin; and that he always doth so, in all his dispensations. He sometimes has higher designs in view than barely to restrain sin: he sometimes, perhaps, suffers it to prevail for a time, that his power might be more manifest in destroying it; hence we read, 'Moreover, the law 'entered'---

'entered'---not merely to reſtrain ſin, but---'that the 'offence might abound; but where ſin abounded, 'grace did much more abound; that as ſin hath reign- 'unto death, even ſo might grace reign, through righ- 'teouſneſs, unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. 'Wherefore, then, ſerveth the law? It was added be- 'cauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come, to 'whom the promiſe was made.' Rom. v. 20, 21. Gal. iii. 19. St. Paul ſays, 'Sin, taking occaſion by the 'commandment, wrought in me all manner of concu- 'piſcence; for, without the law, ſin was dead. Was, 'then, that which was good made death unto me? God 'forbid: but ſin, that it might appear ſin, working 'death in me, by that which is good; that ſin, by the 'commandment, might become exceeding ſinful.'--- Rom. vii. 8, 13. Perhaps, if the puniſhment of ſins immediately followed the commiſſion of them, it would be a ſtronger and more effectual reſtraint than any threatenings of future miſery; yet God does not think it neceſſary to reſtrain ſin by that mean, though it is expreſsly aſſerted, that, 'Becauſe ſentence againſt an 'evil work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore is the 'heart of the ſons of men fully ſet in them to do evil.' Eccleſ. viii. 11. There is no doubt but if the awful puniſhments of the future ſtate were made viſible to our ſenſes, by any means, they would prove a powerful reſtraint to ſin; yet God has not thought fit to reſtrain it by thoſe, and perhaps many other poſſible ways; wherefore I have a right to doubt of the premiſes; for if the ſtrongeſt poſſible reſtraints were laid upon ſin, it might not be ſo conſiſtent with a ſtate of probation, as thoſe reaſonable reſtraints which God hath thought fit to lay upon it.

2. But it may be queſtioned, whether there is not ſomething in the idea of limited, yet certain puniſhment, ſo juſt, equitable, reaſonable, and evident, that is much more calculated to produce belief, and conſequently more effectual to deſtroy falſe hopes of eſcaping it, and alſo to check that daring preſumption, which riſes out of the idea of *endleſs miſery*, than can be

be found in the contrary doctrine. *Endleſs puniſhment* ſeems to ſhock tender minds, at leaſt. I heard of a little boy, to whom his mother conſtantly kept preaching damnation without end, for every fault: one day, after ſhe had been diſcourſing with him in that manner, he went out to work, but ſoon returned back, ſuddenly opened the door, and, with an air of ſurpriſe, cried out, 'Why, mother, the law ſays, *An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot*; but 'you ſay, ten thouſand for one, and that puniſhment 'ſhall never end.' I have heard of numbers that had no better excuſe for ſinning greedily, than this, *viz.* that there were no hopes of their being ſaved; that, therefore, they were determined to ſin as much as poſſible, ſince it could make no difference. I have reaſon to ſay, from what I know of mankind, that more perſons refuſe to believe in Divine Revelation, becauſe it is commonly thought to contain the doctrine of *endleſs miſery*, than from any other cauſe: and numbers have embraced it immediately, upon being fairly convinced that it was not neceſſary to underſtand it in that light. And a very ſenſible Deiſt once ſaid to an acquaintance of mine, who believed and preached the Univerſal doctrine, 'Had I been acquainted with your ſyſtem 'thirty years ago, I ſhould have been a zealous Chriſ-'tian; and as great a friend to Revelation as I have 'been an enemy.'---'And, pray, why not now, Doc-'tor?'---'Becauſe I am aſhamed, having ſo long been 'fighting againſt it, to receive it now.'

3. Though damnation has been commonly underſtood to be *endleſs*, for many ages, yet it has not (as far as we can judge) prevented evil at all, or very little: but I have mentioned before how very ſtrict thoſe people live, who receive and hold the ſyſtem of limited puniſhments: whether it is, that *endleſs damnation* is too unnatural to be believed, and that *limited puniſhments*, being more reaſonable, ſeem more certain; or, whether it be, that, by conſidering they ſhall be puniſhed, either without end, or not at all; and every one thinking endleſs puniſhment is more than they deſerve, but

is only reserved for some greater sinners, and therefore they have nothing to fear from it, I shall not pretend to determine; but certain it is, that where the idea of endless misery prevails, it has not prevented iniquity in the measure that might have been expected, on the supposition of its being the truth of God.

4. The great number of heathens that die without ever being favoured with the light of the gospel, and certainly without ever hearing of endless misery---the many that die in a state of infancy and childhood---together with the instances of ideots, and persons born deaf---all convince me, more than any logical arguments, that God has many ways of instructing and reclaiming his creatures, in another state, that we are at present unacquainted with.

5. It is not so much the intention of God merely to restrain sin, as to shew it in all its dreadful deformity, punish it according to its deserts, and, finally, to shew the super-abounding of his grace, in overcoming and totally destroying it out of his creation; which shall be accomplished when he that sitteth upon the throne shall make all things new; 'And there shall be no more 'death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there 'be any more pain; for the former things are passed 'away.' Rev. xxi. 4.

6. As the doctrine of the final Restoration has been shewn in itself not to have the least tendency to licentiousness, but directly the reverse, and, as far as I can learn, by history or my own observation, those who have believed it, in the manner here laid down, as perfectly consistent with a future state of rewards and punishments, have been particularly careful to depart from iniquity of every kind: yet, if any should be so lost to all that is good, as to pervert this truth (revealed for contrary purposes) to their own destruction, they alone, must bear the blame, the loss, and the punishment. The Scriptures of truth have been perverted; yet, that is no argument against Divine Revelation: the gospel of the grace of God has been abused, but should it never be preached on that account?

count? Some, in the apoſtles' days, turned the grace of God itſelf into wantonneſs or laſciviouſneſs (ſee Jude, 4.); and others pretended that thoſe holy men encouraged ſin, by proclaiming ſalvation to ſinners, through grace, or faith in Chriſt; of which St. Paul complains, (Rom. iii. 8.) 'We be ſlanderouſly reported; and ſome 'affirm that we ſay, Let us do evil that good may 'come; whoſe damnation is juſt.' The holy apoſtle abhorred and conſtantly denied this horrid conſequence, which ſome perverſe minds pretended to draw from his doctrine; he declared that the damnation of ſuch was juſt, who did ſin that grace might abound, or who affirmed that the doctrine led thereto, or that the apoſtles taught or practiſed any ſuch things; nevertheleſs, (not as fools, but as wiſe) they did not think fit to lay the goſpel aſide, and refuſe to preach ſalvation through Chriſt any more on that account---The ſelf-ſame reaſon applies to the preſent caſe.

Friend. I muſt confeſs, that you have ſo far prevailed as to ſilence this great objection; for certainly the belief of the Reſtoration ſeems, by your account of it, conſiſtent with a ſtate of grace, and the knowledge and practice of religion. But though you have obviated ſeveral objections, there is one you have not yet touched, which is very conſiderable, and I am doubtful that it will be difficult, if not impoſſible, for you to anſwer fairly; it may be thus expreſſed---*God has abounded towards us in all wiſdom*; one inſtance is his hanging out the threatenings of the ſevereſt puniſhments, to prevent his creatures from ſinning while in this world; but to tell them at the ſame time, that if they ſhould ſin he means to ſave them, is not *prudent*; becauſe that leſſens, if not deſtroys, the force of his threatening. He told Adam, that if he did eat, he ſhould ſurely die; but did not tell him (at the ſame time) that if he ſhould eat, his caſe would not be remedileſs: this were to take down with one hand what he had ſet up with the other. After the threatening failed of the effect, he told him ſo, and not before; this was prudently done: ſo after his threatenings fail

of effect in this ſtate, is the time to reveal his deſign of ſaving daring ſinners. We may therefore be ſure he has not done it yet, and that we miſconſtrue thoſe texts which ſeem to contain ſuch a revelation. The next ſtate is the only ſtate to preach the doctrine, and reveal the doctrine. If you preach it here it will be unneceſſary to preach it in hell; for obſtinate ſinners will carry it in their heads thither.

Minister. As ſpecious and plauſible as this objection ſeems, I doubt not of being able to anſwer it fairly, without evading the natural force of it in the leaſt. The firſt thing that I ſhall notice in this objection is the very different and contrary manner in which you apply thoſe words of the apoſtle from his firſt evident intention. *He hath abounded towards us in all wiſdom and prudence, having made known unto us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf, that in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.* Epheſ. i. 8---10. God hath judged it to be the height of heavenly wiſdom and prudence to make known to his ſaints his glorious purpoſe finally to rehead all things in Chriſt; and we ought not to preſume to be more wiſe and prudent than he. There is no doubt but God hath revealed this great truth more immediately to his ſaints and faithful ones for their conſolation than for the benefit of the finally impenitent.

It is of amazing, I had almoſt ſaid of infinite uſe to the people of God, to have this divine counſel declared to them in the preſent time. The knowledge of this truth entirely removes all hard thoughts from the minds of thoſe who receive it, as I can teſtify by experience; for ſince I have believed in the doctrine of the Univerſal Reſtoration, I have never had one hard thought of God abiding for one minute in my mind, that I remember, and never expect to have any more, while I continue to believe it firmly.

The

The belief of the Reſtoration is of great uſe in ſupporting good people under their ſorrows and trials here; the idea that evil ſhall be deſtroyed, and all things reſtored to their primitive glory is the moſt conſolatory of all other ideas. As this doctrine tends to remove the greateſt difficulties from the plan of Providence, and alſo from divine Revelation, it is evident that the knowledge of it muſt be of the greateſt uſe to all that love their great Creator. And therefore, if the revelation of it anſwered no other purpoſe in this life, but for the happineſs, joy, and ſatisfaction of ſuch as love God, we might be ſure that he hath made it known, and that we rightly underſtand thoſe paſſages that hold it forth; for ſince 'the ſecret of the 'Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew 'them his covenant.' Pſalm xxv. 14. And 'The Lord 'God will do nothing, but he revealeth his ſecret unto 'his ſervants the prophets.' Amos, iii. 7. There is all the reaſon to conclude, that if God ever intended to reſtore mankind hereafter, he would not fail to reveal it to his choſen and faithful ſervants. And this he has done, if I can underſtand the meaning of words.

It is true that God did not inform our firſt parents, before they ſinned, that he had provided a remedy; but not long did he delay, after the fall, to reveal to them, that the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head; Gen. iii. 15.: and this one text contains in miniature all that I believe reſpecting the Reſtoration of mankind; for if the ſerpent's head is finally to be bruiſed, his power and influence over mankind muſt be entirely deſtroyed---and then what ſhall prevent their return to God?

Beſides, it is impoſſible to read the Scriptures attentively, and not perceive that God very frequently mixes promiſes of mercies among his ſevereſt threatenings of judgment; and yet he doth not throw down with one hand, what he builds up with the other.

Your objection ſeems to ſuppoſe that the doctrine of the Reſtoration ſuperſedes and ſets aſide thoſe puniſhments which God has threatened to inflict upon the impeni-

impenitent; or elſe how does the preaching of this doctrine weaken the force of the threatenings? But this is a very falſe idea; for we acknowledge that the threatenings ſhall be fulfilled, and not that the diſobedient ſhall eſcape unpuniſhed. There is a great deal of difference between thoſe two ideas, though you would intimate them to be the ſame, and that we contradict God by aſſuring the wicked that they ſhall eſcape the juſt judgment of God. But we only declare that an end ſhall finally come to their puniſhment, and that, when they ſhall be ſufficiently humbled, a diſpenſation of mercy ſhall ſucceed that of judgment. Let me aſk you, Has not God threatened mankind with death on the account of ſin? 'Duſt 'thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return.' Gen. iii. 19. Well, tell me, is this threatening either weakened or deſtroyed by the knowledge of the great doctrine of the reſurrection of the dead? Did not God threaten the children of Iſrael with dreadful judgments to prevent their ſinning, and that they ſhould be diſperſed among all nations? But will you ſay, that he either weakened or deſtroyed the force of his threatenings, becauſe he promiſed them at the ſame time that at laſt he would return their captivity, and reſtore them as at the firſt, and do better unto them, than at their beginning?

The laws of this country condemn criminals to death: would it be thought that I ſhould weaken or deſtroy the force of the penal ſtatutes, by ſaying, that the execution of the law could only be felt for a certain time, beyond which it could not endure? Is not every malefactor under the ſentence of death ſuppoſed to know this? And yet, will any preſume to ſay, that theſe laws are entirely weakened, and their force deſtroyed, becauſe they do not condemn tranſgreſſors to endleſs puniſhments? But if it be allowed that torments which are but momentary have a conſiderable influence in reſtraining many vices, there cannot be the ſmalleſt reaſon to fear that the doctrine of juſt retribution, according to the deeds done in the body, will open

open the door to vice and immorality, but on the contrary. But this objection is so near a-kin to the last which you proposed, that it hardly deserves a distinct consideration; for if the doctrine of the Restoration does not lead men to commit sin, (as I am sure it has no such tendency) then no harm can be apprehended from its being known in this state. And whereas you argue, that as it would not be proper for the present state, we may be sure God hath not revealed it; I, on the contrary, think it is plainly revealed, and therefore is highly proper for men to know in the present state. You will please, therefore, to notice that the Universal doctrine, so far from tending to render the divine threatenings useless or vain, weakening their force, or setting them aside, operates in the direct contrary manner. I as much believe as you or any other man can do, that all the threatenings will be fulfilled upon the finally impenitent; but dare not carry the matter so far as to set aside the gracious promises of God, with which the Scriptures appear to me to abound, in favour of the final recovery of all at last.

Friend. It must, I think, be confessed, that if the doctrine of the Restoration be true, it would be matter of great joy and comfort for good men to know it; for they have often great trouble and anxiety of mind on the account of their families, friends, neighbours, acquaintance, and mankind in general; which sorrow would be greatly relieved, could they have an idea of the Restoration of all things in the manner that you hold it. But however true this may be, it seems not to be plainly revealed in the Scripture, otherwise it would not have been hidden from the eyes of so many great and good men.

Minister. It is possible, that a subject may be revealed in the plainest manner, and yet the best of men may remain ignorant of it. For instance, were not the sufferings, death, and resurrection of our Lord plainly revealed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament? And yet we know that the apostles of our Saviour

Saviour did not underſtand one of thoſe prophecies. Nay, when Jeſus told them openly and expreſsly that he muſt be delivered into the hands of men, and that they ſhould mock, ſcourge, and crucify him, and that the third day he ſhould riſe again, they did not comprehend his meaning; although he ſpoke to them frequently and very plainly upon the ſubject, and ſaid, 'Let theſe ſayings ſink down into your ears: for the 'Son of man ſhall be delivered into the hands of 'men. But they underſtood not this ſaying, and it 'was hid from them, that they perceived it not; and 'they feared to aſk him of that ſaying.' St. Luke, ix. 44, 45. And in another place we read, 'For he 'taught his diſciples, and ſaid unto them, The ſon of 'man is delivered into the hands of men, and they 'ſhall kill him: and after that he is killed, he ſhall 'riſe the third day.' It is impoſſible that words ſhould be more expreſs, or leſs liable to be miſunderſtood.--- 'But,' as the evangeliſt immediately informs us, 'they underſtood not that ſaying, and were afraid to 'aſk him.' St. Mark, ix. 31, 32. And in the ſame chapter we find, that after our Lord Jeſus was transfigured upon the mount, in the preſence of Peter, James, and John, 'As they came down from the mountain, 'he charged them that they ſhould tell no man what 'things they had ſeen, till the ſon of man were riſen 'from the dead. And they kept that ſaying with 'themſelves, queſtioning one with another what the 'riſing from the dead ſhould mean.' Ver. 9, 10. This was what Chriſt taught them not only plainly, but alſo frequently. See St. Matth. xvi. 21. xvii. 9, 22, 23. xx. 17, 18, 19. xxvi. 31, 32. St. Mark, viii. 31. ix. 9, 10, 31, 32, x. 32, 33, 34. xiv. 27, 28. St. Luke, ix. 21, 22, 44, 45. xviii. 31, 32, 33, 34.

Yet notwithſtanding the plainneſs and frequency of theſe predictions, and the pains which Chriſt took to inſtil thoſe ideas into them, they never underſtood them at all until ſome time after they were fulfilled. For when they ſaw him taken and delivered into the hands of men, and treated exactly according to his

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own words often repeated, they were entirely disappointed, and all their hopes seemed to die within them. And when he was risen from the dead, they would not believe the testimony of those who had seen him, and would hardly trust their own senses, so ignorant were they of what he had told them.

St. John was the first of the disciples who believed that he was risen, for thus he writes---" Then went 'in also that other disciple, who came first to the sepul-'chre, and he saw and believed. For as yet they 'knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from 'the dead.' St. John, xx. 8, 9. This instance is much so to my purpose, and proves so evidently that a thing may be plainly revealed, and expressed in the clearest manner, and yet not be understood, that I hardly need mention any more. But I will mention another, and that is, the calling of the gentiles. This was spoken of by the prophets in the clearest language; and Jesus, after his resurrection, gave a full commission to his apostles, which one would think it was impossible for them to misunderstand.

'All power is given unto me in heaven and in 'earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations,' &c. St. Matth. xxviii. 18, 19. 'Go ye into all the world, 'and preach the gospel to every creature.' St. Mark, xvi. 15.

'Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to 'suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and 'that repentance and remission of sins should be 'preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 'And ye are witnesses of these things.' St. Luke, xxiv. 46---48. 'Ye shall receive power after that the Holy 'Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses 'unto me both in Judea and Samaria, and unto the 'utmost part of the earth.' Acts, i. 8. But the apostles themselves, even after the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, were without understanding respecting the calling of the gentiles, until St. Peter was taught it by a vision from heaven. See Acts, x.

And

And St. Paul ſpeaks of the ſubject as a myſtery that was hid from ages and generations, and particularly revealed to him, and to the ſaints in that day. See Epheſ. iii. 1---11. Col. i. 25---27.

Wherefore when I conſider that the apoſtles themſelves could not for a time ſee thoſe things to be revealed, which yet were moſt plainly, fully, and frequently told them, I cannot wonder that many great and good men now ſhould not ſee the general Redemption and final Reſtoration of all things plainly revealed in the Scriptures, though to me ſcarce any ſubject appears more evident. It gives me now but little concern to hear many ſay, that they cannot ſee the matter plainly declared in the Bible, ſince I know that things have been there that wiſe and good men could not ſee; and what has happened in times paſt may take place now: and if I can ſee for myſelf this great truth made known, it is enough for me. I am not to enquire, What does this man believe? or What ſhall the other do? I muſt believe what the Scripture appears to me to teach, and do what I am there commanded, let others believe or do as they may.

Friend. But I have heard ſome ſay of you---'How 'comes this man to know more than all the world?--- 'Have there not been many great, wiſe, and good 'men in all ages, that have never thought of theſe 'things? If this doctrine of the final Reſtoration of 'all things had been true, ſurely our good, wiſe, and 'learned miniſters would have diſcovered it, and pro- 'claimed it long ago. But the doctrine of endleſs mi- 'ſery is a point in which they ſeem generally to agree, 'however they differ in other matters, and therefore it 'muſt be true, and this doctrine of the general Re- 'ſtoration, which this man holds up, almoſt alone, muſt 'be falſe.'

Minister. I am very far from pretending to be wiſer than any that have gone before me; and as for this doctrine of the Reſtoration, it was not only believed and preached by the apoſtles, but many of the ancient fathers, who lived in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, were bold

bold witneſſes for this glorious truth. It is true, that, when the Church of Rome roſe to ſupreme power, the popes and councils endeavoured to extirpate the *merciful doctors* (as thoſe who believed the general Reſtoration were called in deriſion) and their adherents, but it was not until near the cloſe of the ſeventh century that they were able to ſilence the witneſſes for this truth. This, as well as many other precious truths, then lay hid until the Reformation, when it began a little to revive, and hath gradually increaſed ever ſince. Several great authors have written upon it; many hundreds, and even thouſands, have believed it, and found comfort and joy therein. Nay, there are many miniſters who believe it now as firmly as I do, but do not chuſe to confeſs or preach it for various reaſons; and great numbers of private Chriſtians enjoy the comfort and happineſs of believing it ſecretly. But put the caſe that I ſtood alone in this teſtimony, yet if, upon a fair examination the Scriptures hold forth this idea, and if all objections againſt it may be fully anſwered, why ſhould my teſtimony be refuſed on the account of its ſingularity? God has an abſolute right to uſe what means or inſtruments he pleaſes to manifeſt his truth and to fulfil his purpoſes; and though I am nothing, and in his ſight am leſs than nothing, yet he is able, by the things that are not, to confound and bring to nought the things that are, that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence. 1 Cor. i. 28, 29.

I acknowledge that the generality of miniſters, in the preſent day, profeſs to believe endleſs miſery, though they diſagree in other points; and indeed one reaſon why they all fall out ſo much about other doctrines is becauſe they receive this as a firſt principle, as is very obvious; for were thoſe who believe that Chriſt died only for a part of mankind, once to give up the idea of endleſs miſery, they would acknowledge the univerſality of the love of God, and confeſs that Jeſus died for all in the fulleſt ſenſe. And, on the other hand, if thoſe who believe in general Redemption were not ſo exceedingly tenacious of the doctrine of endleſs

endleſs miſery, they would not oppoſe the doctrine of election, nor hold, that the will of God might be finally fruſtrated, and that the death of Chriſt ſhall be in vain, with reſpect to many, and that many objects of the divine love ſhall finally periſh to all eternity.—These inconſiſtencies in their ſentiments, and the conteſts between them and thoſe who hold partial redemption and ſalvation, are therefore chiefly, if not wholly, owing to both parties being agreed in this moſt dreadful doctrine of endleſs miſery.

It is beautiful to obſerve the progreſſion of the glorious goſpel, from its opening to our firſt parents in the garden down to the preſent day. I have ſometimes mentioned in public, that the more the goſpel is known and revealed, the larger and richer it appears.

It firſt ſeemed confined to one family or nation, but later diſcoveries ſhewed that all nations had a part therein, and all ſorts of people were deſigned to ſhare in its bleſſings: now the glorious news begins to be publiſhed abroad, not only that all nations and all ſorts of people, but all perſons and individuals, without exception, not only *may* partake of its benefits, but *ſhall*, in due time, enjoy great advantages thereby.

God always adapts his remedies to the evils that prevail in the world; and therefore he hath opened his counſels to men according to their different capacities, needs, and circumſtances. Chriſtianity might, formerly, have been received and ſincerely practiſed, without being inveſtigated at all; but when infidelity riſes up and attacks it, as it does in this our age, it becomes the duty of its friends to defend it, by enquiring into its meaning; and, laying all prejudices aſide, to receive as truth thoſe things which God hath revealed, and the ſame to vindicate before the world.

It might not formerly have been neceſſary to underſtand all the prophecies; and yet now, as the time of their fulfilment draws nigh, they may become more important, be more ſtudied, and better underſtood; and for this purpoſe God may actually illaminate the minds of ſome, to ſet them forth in a more rational, ſcriptural,

ſcriptural, conſiſtent manner, than they have appeared in hitherto. And if it ſhould pleaſe God to make any uſe of my tongue or pen for this great purpoſe, the glory ſhall be all aſcribed to his name, to whom alone it is due; I ſhall have nothing to glory or boaſt of, foraſmuch as I can only communicate what I receive; and I hope none will refuſe to receive the truth, however weak or unworthy the inſtrument by which God may pleaſe to ſend it.

Friend. If this is the truth which you hold forth, however contrary to the commonly received opinions of the age, I ſee no reaſon why men ſhould refuſe to hear what you have to ſay; but I have heard many exclaim againſt you in the ſevereſt manner, and declare that they would not hear you, nor read your writings on any account; and others have ſaid, that they could confute and overthrow your whole ſyſtem in ten minutes; but whether they would be able to make their words good, if they ſhould enter the liſts with you, is another matter, and cannot be determined till a fair trial.

Minister. I can aſſure you, my friend, that I ſhould not have the leaſt objection to their making the attempt; for though I am conſcious that neither my natural or acquired abilities, are worthy to be compared to thoſe of many excellent characters who hold the contrary ſentiments; yet the goodneſs of the cauſe in which I am engaged inſpires me with courage to attempt its vindication, let who will enter the liſts with me. For when the evidence of this moſt glorious truth firſt began to appear to my mind, I was determined never to believe or profeſs it, until I could anſwer every objection that could be brought from the Scriptures againſt it, fairly, and without any torturing or twiſting the words of truth; and it pleaſed God ſo to open matters to my view, as to take every objection out of my mind, and to clear up every doubt, in ſuch a manner, that I have full ſatisfaction: and I can ſafely ſay, in the fear of God, that I am ſo far from being offended with thoſe who queſtion me upon the

matter, and thereby give me an opportunity of answering for myself, that I take it as an act of kindness; and as I stand ready to be reproved wherein I am out of the way, so I shall thank the person who, in the spirit of love, convinces me of my error: 'Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let them reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.' But let not the man who would write, dip his pen in gall; nor he that would converse, make his tongue as a sharp sword: but 'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And, above all things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts.' These are the tempers of mind we ought always to possess; and especially when we discourse upon the great things of the kingdom of God.

Friend. I have the same desires that you express: and I think it is to the shame of human nature, and a reproach to the innocent cause of Christianity, that religious disputes have been carried on with such amazing bitterness and acrimony. Men seem frequently to forget that they are brethren; and that they must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. If they remembered these things as they ought, they would not revile, censure, judge, and condemn each other as they do: from which evil practices may the good Lord preserve us, while we debate this very important subject; for though I am determined to urge every thing, that I can with propriety, in the strongest manner that I am able, yet I am willing to stipulate, on my part, that if I should use any reproachful or censorious

ſorious language in the remainder of the debate, I will give you leave to conſider it as totally giving up the cauſe in which I am engaged.

Minister. And I hereby promiſe the ſame; and I am determined never to write a page of controverſy, unleſs it can be written in the very ſpirit of love and true benevolence, with a ſincere deſire to find and embrace the truth.

The want of this in moſt controverſial writers has made ſerious people ſo weary of controverſy, that they will neither read nor hear it on any account: nor can I wonder at it, for ſuch bitterneſs tends entirely to root out the ſpirit of true religion.

Friend. I hope we ſhall ſhew an example to mankind, how diſputes ought to be carried on in love, and in the fear of God, and for the purpoſe of mutual edification. But as our preſent diſcourſe has been long and very important, I will take my leave of you for this time, hoping, at a future opportunity, to have more converſation with you on this ſo intereſting a ſubject.

END OF THE THIRD DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE IV.

Friend. I AM happy to have another opportunity of discourſing with you, concerning that point in which you differ from your brethren, the final Reſtoration of all Things. I have thought much of the ſubject ſince I ſaw you; and though I muſt acknowledge that you have anſwered, as far as I can ſee, ſome of the greateſt objections that I have found in the Scriptures, yet a conſiderable number remain to be anſwered, before I can venture to receive as a truth what I have hitherto looked upon as a *dangerous hereſy*; and, as I have many queſtions to propoſe, I wiſh to make the beſt uſe of my time.

Minister. Propoſe your objections, as freely as you pleaſe; and I will endeavour to anſwer them as briefly, and at the ſame time as plainly as poſſible.

Friend. Chriſt threatens the Jews with an eternal excluſion from his preſence: 'Ye ſhall ſeek me, and 'ſhall not find me; and where I am, thither ye can-'not come.' St. John, vii. 34. 'Then ſaith Jeſus again 'unto them, I go my way, and ye ſhall ſeek me, and 'ſhall die in your ſins: whither I go, ye cannot come. 'Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of 'this world, I am not of this world. I ſaid therefore 'unto you, That ye ſhall die in your ſins; for if ye 'believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins.' St. John, viii. 21, 23, 24.

Minister. Do you recollect that our Lord uſes words nearly ſimilar to ſome of theſe to his own diſciples?

Friend. No, indeed; I do not remember any ſuch like expreſſions uſed to them. Can you ſhew them to me?

Minister.

Minister. If I do, will you acknowledge the force of the objection to be removed?

Friend. Certainly, I must.

Minister. Then read St. John, xiii. 33. 'Little 'children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall 'seek me, and, as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go 'ye cannot come; so now I say unto you.'

Friend. I am surprised that I should never have observed this before.---Let me read the passage---Oh! but stop---it is explained in the 36th verse: 'Simon 'Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus 'answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow 'me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.' But nothing of the kind is intimated respecting the Jews.

Minister. Not in that text, I confess; but in many others it is more than intimated that they shall come to know and love him, yea, and to behold him as their friend. I think it is intimated in those words which our Saviour used in the close of his threatenings to Jerusalem---'Behold, your house is left unto you de-'solate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see 'me henceforth, until the time come when ye shall 'say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the 'Lord.' St. Matth. xxiii. 38, 39. St. Luke, xiii. 35. It is more than intimated in these words---'And so *all* '*Israel* shall be saved. For God hath concluded them 'all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.' Rom. xi. 26, 32. 'In Jehovah shall *all* the seed of '*Israel* be justified, and shall glory.' Isaiah, xlv. 25. 'I will call them my people, who were not my people; 'and her Beloved, that was not beloved. And it shall 'come to pass, that in the place where it was said 'unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be 'called The children of the living God.' Rom. ix. 25, 26. 'Now will I bring again the captivity of '*Jacob*, and have mercy upon the *whole* house of '*Israel:* I have gathered them unto their own land, 'and have left none of them.' Ezek. xxxix. 25---28. 'And I will multiply men upon you, (the mountains 'of Israel) *all* the house of *Israel*, even *all* of it.'

xxxvi. 10. 'Behold, O my people, I will open your 'graves, and cauſe you to come up out of your graves, 'and bring you into the land of Iſrael. And ye ſhall 'know that I am JEHOVAH, when I have opened your 'graves, O my people, and brought you up out of 'your graves, and ſhall put my ſpirit in you, and ye 'ſhall live, and I ſhall place you in your own land: 'then ſhall ye know that I, JEHOVAH, have ſpoken it, 'and performed it, ſaith JEHOVAH.' Chap. xxxvii. 12, 13, 14.

FRIEND. But this returning from captivity can only reſpect ſuch as are alive at that period, when the Lord ſhall ſet his hand the ſecond time to recover the remnant of his people from Aſſyria, &c.

MINISTER. That is more than any one can prove, as the expreſſion is ſometimes uſed evidently for the reſtoration of ſuch whoſe bodies are deſtroyed, beyond diſpute; as in the caſe of Sodom and her daughters, who were taken away by fire and brimſtone from heaven, whoſe captivity God promiſes to return, together with the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, at the ſame time that he will bring again the captivity of Jeruſalem and her daughters, in the midſt of them. See Ezek. xvi. 44---63. eſpecially verſes 53, 55, 61.

FRIEND. But Mr. Poole's continuators, as well as many other eminent divines, tell us, that theſe which you take to be promiſes, are only dreadful threatenings, and their meaning is this---I never will bring again the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, nor the captivity of Sodom and her daughters; neither will I ever bring again the captivity of *thy captives*, in the midſt of them: when Sodom and her daughters ſhall return to their former eſtate, (which is impoſſible) and Samaria and her daughters ſhall return to their former eſtate, (which ſhall never be) then *thou* and thy daughters ſhall return to your former eſtate: but that time ſhall never come.

MINISTER. I know ſuch is their interpretation, which proves nothing more than the weakneſs of their cauſe; for in all this, they expreſsly contradict God, who, from the

the 60th verſe to the end of the chapter, promiſes bleſſings to Jeruſalem in the moſt abſolute manner; that he will remember the covenant made withher in the days of her youth, and will eſtabliſh unto her an everlaſting covenant; that ſhe ſhall receive her ſiſters, Samaria and Sodom (called her *elder* and her *younger* ſiſters); and he promiſes to give them to her for daughters; not by the firſt covenant indeed, but by the new and everlaſting covenant, which he will make in thoſe days; then ſhall the covenant be firmly eſtabliſhed with her; ſhe ſhall know JEHOVAH, ſhall remember and be confounded, and never ſhall open her mouth in pride any more, becauſe of her former ſin and ſhame, when God ſhall be pacified towards her for all that ſhe hath done.

How many promiſes has God made to Jeruſalem, in the prophecies, of not only bringing her *captivity*, and returning her to her *former eſtate*, but even cauſing greater bleſſings than ever to come to her, and of doing *better* to her than in her *beginning*, making her an *eternal excellency*, a *joy of many generations*, &c.

It is therefore very ſurpriſing, that men profeſſing to believe the Bible ſhould dare be ſo bold as to deny theſe promiſes, and declare that God will never bring Jeruſalem to her former eſtate! They might, indeed, ſafely ſay, that the promiſes have not yet been fulfilled; but it is too bold to aſſert, that therefore they will never be accompliſhed. Were there no other text to prove the Reſtoration of the Jews who died in their ſins, and indeed of the whole fallen race of Adam, I ſhould judge this ſufficient---'*All* that the *Father giveth* 'me, *ſhall come to me*; and him that cometh unto me, I 'will in no wiſe caſt out. For I came down from 'heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him 'that ſent me. And this is the *Father*'s will, which 'hath ſent me, that of *all* which he hath given me, I 'ſhould loſe *nothing*, but ſhould raiſe it up again at the 'laſt day.' St. John, vi. 37---39. Here we find that *Chriſt*, our *Lord*, declares, not only that *all* that the *Father giveth* him *ſhall come* to him, but alſo that they ſhall

shall come in such a manner, as in no wise to be *cast out*; and that such is the *Father*'s will, that nothing of all which he hath given to the *Son*, should be lost, or missing, at that great day when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the *Father*, who did put all things under him; and as this is the will of that God *who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*, and as Christ has undertaken the accomplishment of this will of the Father, it concludes absolutely and forcibly against the doctrine of *endless misery* and *annihilation*.

Friend. It certainly does with respect to all those whom the *Father giveth*, or hath given, to the *Son*; but to none else.

Minister. That is all that I contend for: I ground the Restoration of all things upon these two premises, which I call the *major* and the *minor*; 1. That *all things* are given to the *Son*, without exception:---- 2. That *all* that are *given him*, *shall come to him*, in such a manner as *not to be cast out*; and that none shall be missing, lost, or wholly destroyed, but shall be forthcoming, in that great day when Christ shall give up the kingdom to the Father.

Friend. But can you prove your *major*? I am sensible that the *minor* has been the great foundation upon which *particular redemption*, &c. has been supported; but if the *major* can be proved, it will set the strongest weapons of those who hold *partial decrees*, &c. directly against them, and will give another turn to the argument.

Minister. I can prove the *major* by the same positive expressions as the *minor*, and by more passages of Scripture; and you shall judge for yourself, whether I quote them fairly, and whether they can be invalidated by any arguments which will not, at the same time, invalidate the *minor*. I will quote the several texts at large, as they are of great importance.---

St. Matth. xi. 27. '*All things* are delivered unto 'me of my *Father*, and no man knoweth the *Son*, but 'the *Father*; neither knoweth any man the *Father*, 'save

'save the *son*, and he to whomsoever the *son* will re-'veal him.' The very same words are mentioned by St. Luke; see chap. x. 22.

But the most striking passages of this kind are found in the gospel of St. John, chap. iii. 35. and xiii. 3.---- 'The *Father* loveth the *son*, and hath given *all things* 'into his hands.' 'Jesus knowing that the *Father* had 'given *all things* into his hands, and that he was come 'from *God*, and went to *God*,' &c.

God hath moreover said to his *son*, 'Ask of me, and 'I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and 'the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Psalm ii. 8.

Thus, *all things* are given to *Christ*, without exception. The *major* and *minor* being both proved from Scripture, we may venture to draw this conclusion:

If *all things* are given into the hands of Christ by the Father; and all that the Father giveth, or hath given, shall come to Christ, in such a manner as not to be cast out; then shall all men be restored.

Here the whole Christian world may unite, without either party being obliged to give up their favourite tenets: and while some strongly contend, and prove from Scripture, that *all things* are delivered into the hands of Jesus; let the others go on to prove, that *all* that the Father giveth, shall come in such a manner as not to be cast out: thus shall the truth be promoted mutually and equally, by those who seem to contradict each other; but neither shall, in that case, contradict what our Lord hath said.

But as *all things*, or *all men*, without exception, are given to Jesus, that he might restore, or bring them back to God, in his own way and time; so is he invested with *all power*, that he might be able to accomplish so great a work. Jesus spake, saying, '*All pow-'er* is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.' St. Matth. xxviii. 18. 'For as the Father hath life in 'himself, so hath he given to the son to have life in 'himself; and hath given him authority to execute 'judgment also, because he is the son of man.' St. John,

John, v. 26, 27. Jesus, our *Lord*, has power to quicken souls who are dead in trespasses and sins; see Ephes. ii. 1. He himself saith, 'Verily, verily, I say unto 'you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead 'shall hear the voice of the son of God, and they that 'hear shall live.' St. John, v. 25. He hath power to 'raise all the dead that are in their graves; for he saith, 'Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in 'which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 'and shall come forth; they that have done good to 'the resurrection of life; and they have done evil to 'the resurrection of damnation.' Verse 29. But he has not only power to raise the dead, and quicken whom he will; to give rewards to them that love him, and to pass sentence of judgment and condemnation upon his foes, and they that have done evil; but has also power to *subdue all things* unto himself, to *reconcile all things*, and to *rehead all things* in himself: and whatever methods he may use towards mankind, and whatever miseries he may suffer them to feel for their sins, and how long soever the dreadful age of judgment and fiery indignation may last, Christ has given us to understand, in his prayer to the Father, that the power which he hath, was given with a design far superior to this (though judgment is included); he saith, (in that address, which, for its grandeur, beauty, simplicity, and majesty, never was equalled)---'As thou hast given him 'power over *all flesh*, that he should give eternal life 'to as many (παν, *pan*, ALL) as thou hast given him. 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, 'the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast 'sent.' St. John, xvii. 2, 3. Here we see, that his power over all flesh was given him for this grand purpose, that ultimately he might give eternal life; not only endless existence, but the knowledge of God and his Christ, to *all* that the Father hath given him, which are all without exception. This is the will of God, that of *all* which he hath given the son, he should lose nothing; but should give eternal life, even the knowledge of God, which he alone can give, to all, without

out reſerve, whom the Father hath given him; this is the will which Chriſt came to do, and this he hath power to perform. Now, if he came purpoſely to do the will of God, and if it is the will of God, that of all that the Father hath given to the ſon he ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould bring all to himſelf, in ſuch a manner as that they ſhould not be caſt out, and give them all eternal life---and if all, without reſerve, are given to him, and univerſal power and dominion are his for this very purpoſe---if all theſe premiſes are true---as who can deny?---then nothing can be more evident than this concluſion, *viz.* that *All ſhall be at laſt reſtored.*

'It is written in the prophets, (ſaith Jeſus) And 'they ſhall be all taught of God. Every man, there-'fore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, 'cometh unto me.' St. John, vi. 45. If *all* ſhall be taught of God---and *all* that are taught ſhall come to Chriſt---and none that come to him ſhall be caſt out or rejected---if all theſe premiſes are true, (and I think they are fully proved) how very naturally the concluſion follows, *viz.* that *all* ſhall be finally brought home to God before Chriſt ſhall reſign the kingdom to the Father.

Our bleſſed Lord is inveſted with power ſufficient to perform this work; it is the will of God that it ſhould be done; Chriſt came into the world on purpoſe to begin, and lay a foundation for the ſame; he hath laid a ſufficient foundation, by taſting death for *all*; one died for *all*; he gave himſelf a ranſom for *all*, to be teſtified in due time: and he ſeemed confident that he ſhould be able to accompliſh this *will* of the Father, when he ſaid, 'And I, if I be lifted up from the 'earth, will draw *all* men unto me.' St. John, xii. 32. He *was* lifted up from the earth, and therefore the IS is now no more; he will certainly draw all unto himſelf, and give eternal life, or the knowledge of God, to all; *he ſhall ſee of the travail of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied.*---And who can conceive how much it will take to ſatisfy the capacious ſoul of the *Son of God*, and eſpecially

cially after having borne such deadly pains for *all?*---- These passages, my friend, establish my mind in the belief of the final Universal Restitution, beyond all hesitation; nevertheless, I would not wish to force your assent, were it in my power, but only to lay before you that evidence which has wrought upon me, and has brought me over, notwithstanding my education, prejudices, former sentiments, custom, the multitude, my interest, my honour, and connections, were all against it.

Friend. I suppose you know the expositions that are given by the generality of expositors upon all these texts; and it is a fact that thousands and millions of great and good men have read them, many have preached from them, and yet never saw any thing like the Universal Restoration contained in them; but if the doctrine be true, and be at all intended to be set forth in the Scriptures, I must suppose that the passages you have mentioned, may allude to it; but I have many objections yet to propose, which must be fairly answered before I can receive it.

Minister. I would choose you should propose every objection that you can, especially those that may be brought from the sacred page; not only for your own satisfaction, but lest any should be led to suppose that objections of the greatest force are purposely kept back, because no solid answers could be found; whereas I am desirous of hearing whatever can be fairly urged from the Scriptures against this view, and make no doubt of being able to shew that all may be fully answered.

Friend. What do you think of those passages, where God is represented as swearing in his wrath, that unbelievers shall not enter into his rest, which are found in Psalm xcv. 11. Heb. iii. 11, 18, 19. chap. iv. 3, 6. compared with Numb. xiv. Do they not seem to cut off all hopes of the Restoration of those who die in their sins?

Minister. By the *rest* that was promised to the children of Israel, which they forfeited by their unbelief, we

we muſt underſtand the land of Canaan, and not the final ſtate of happineſs. For who can ſuppoſe, that out of more than ſix hundred thouſand men, beſides women, only two will be ſaved? And that even Moſes and Aaron, thoſe ſaints of the Lord, will be loſt among the reſt? For they, as well as others, entered not in; becauſe they believed not God, to ſanctify him before the congregation: ſee Numb. xx. 12. Only Caleb and Joſhua entered into that *reſt*, for they followed the Lord fully: and they are typical of thoſe who ſhall follow the Lamb in all ages, ſo as to obtain a part in the *firſt reſurrection*, over whom the ſecond death ſhall have no power; they who are *called*, and *choſen*, and *faithful*, and are *overcomers*, ſhall reign with Chriſt on earth during the *Millenium*, which is the *reſt* that was pointed out by the land of Canaan.

Friend. Is it indeed? We have commonly underſtood that *reſt* which the children of Iſrael had in the promiſed land, as typical of heaven and eternal felicity.

Miniſter. This cannot be; ſince it is evident that mighty wars were waged, and dreadful battles fought; thirty-one kings and kingdoms were conquered and ſubdued by Joſhua and the Iſraelites, after they paſſed over Jordan; it was not a perfect *reſt*, but only a type of that keeping of the ſabbath which remains for the people of God, into which we are exhorted to enter; which is the time when our Lord, after having conquered the nations of the earth, ſhall reign for a *thouſand years*, before the ſecond reſurrection; but as many of the Iſraelites may be ſaved in the day of the Lord, whoſe carcaſſes fell in the wilderneſs, ſo likewiſe ſhall the names of many be found written in the book of life, at the general judgment, when the dead, ſmall and great, ſhall ſtand before God, who were not worthy to have a part in the firſt reſurrection. Theſe paſſages, therefore, conclude ſtrongly againſt *thoſe* having a part in the firſt reſurrection; but nothing againſt the final Reſtoration, which is a ſtate far beyond, and belongs to another diſpenſation.

Friend. This is quite a different comment from what I have ever heard before; but allowing this objection to be answered, I have another in my mind that appears very difficult, and I should be glad to know what you can say upon it; it is drawn from Isaiah, xxvii. 11. 'For it is a people of no understanding; 'therefore he that made them will not have mercy on 'them, and he that formed them will shew them no 'favour.' How can they ever be restored, if God will not have mercy upon them, nor shew them any favour?

Minister. If we did not understand these words with some limitation, it would be as difficult to reconcile them with other passages of Scripture, as with the doctrine of the Restoration; but if we only limit the time, all is easy; 'He shall have judgment without 'mercy who hath shewed no mercy;' nevertheless, it is added, 'but mercy rejoiceth against judgment.' James, ii. 13. The way I answer all these threatenings, and shew them to be consistent with that boundless mercy of God, that is over all his works, is, to shew that both wrath and mercy have their season; that *anger endureth* but a *moment*, but that *mercy endureth for ever*; which glorious declaration is expressed more than forty times in the Scripture; and that God frequently threatens the greatest judgments, and promiseth the greatest mercies, to the same people and persons. 'Thus saith JEHOVAH, Thy bruise is incur-'able, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to 'plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou 'hast no healing medicines. All thy lovers have for-'gotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded 'thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastise-'ment of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine ini-'quity, because thy sins were increased. Why criest 'thou for thine affliction? Thy sorrow is incurable, 'for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins 'were increased, I have done these things unto thee.' Now, who would not think, from reading these words, that these people were in a most hopeless state, beyond the

the reach of mercy: and that it was in vain for them even to seek it? And yet the very next words speak a language directly contrary: 'Therefore all they that 'devour thee, shall be devoured, &c. For I will re-'store health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy 'wounds, saith JEHOVAH, because they called thee an 'Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh 'after.' See Jer. xxx. 12---17. I could justify this observation by hundreds of passages wherein God threatens his people with judgments the most severe, and declares, that his eye shall not pity, nor his arm save; that he will visit their transgressions upon them, will utterly cast them off, and will not have compassion upon them at all; and then such promises of mercy break out as are sufficient to astonish every one with their greatness. But time would fail to quote them at large. God, by Hosea, says, 'I will no more have 'mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly 'take them away. For ye are not my people, and I 'will not be your God.' And then immediately says, speaking of a time to come, 'And it shall come to 'pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, 'Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto 'them, Ye are the sons of the living God.' See Hosea, i. 6, 9, 10.

The whole prophecy, indeed, seems of a piece with this specimen. In the second chapter it is said, 'Plead 'with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife, 'neither am I her husband; and I will not have mer-'cy upon her children, for they be the children of 'whoredoms,' Then he goes on to pronounce many dreadful threatenings; but the chapter closes with the most amazing promises of mercies to the same people, under the similitude of a wife that had been rejected, and after a long time received again. 'And 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will 'betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in 'judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. 'I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and 'thou shalt know the Lord. And I will sow her unto 'me in the earth, and I will have have mercy upon her

'that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them 'who were not my people, Thou art my people; and 'they shall say, Thou art my God.' See Hosea, ii. 2, 4, 19, 20, 23. Thus the objection admits of a fair and rational answer; and I have been the larger upon it, because I judged it of great importance to clear it up thoroughly, but more passages upon this subject are needless, or I could easily produce great numbers, that speak to the same purpose.

Friend. You have seemed to come over this objection rather better than I could have expected; but I must beg leave to ask you, what you do with that passage: (Psalm xlix. 19.) 'He shall go to the gene-'ration of his fathers; they shall never see light?'

Minister. I render the words עד נצח *gnad netzech*, 'until subdued and overcome, they shall not see the 'light;' *or* 'until the age, or a certain period, they 'shall not see light.' The same words are used in Job, xxxiv. 36, where they are rendered '*unto the end.*' 'My desire is, that Job may be tried unto the end.'—How would it seem to render the words thus—'My 'desire is, that Job may be tried *never*; *or*, may *never* 'be tried?' This would be quite inconsistent with the nature of things, as well as a contradiction in the words themselves; for first to say, 'My desire is, that 'Job may be tried,' and then to add words that mean *never*, is quite ridiculous even to suppose; but render the words, '*unto a time* or *period*,' or, as they will bear, '*until he be subdued* or *overcome*,' and the meaning is both plain and benevolent: but to wish him tried *for ever*, world without end, would be a most malevolent wish; and to wish him tried *never*, would be nonsense.

Friend. This translation is very different from that which we commonly read, in which this text appears a very formidable objection indeed: for if they shall never see the light, they cannot be restored.

Minister. The word *never* is sometimes used in our translation, in such a manner as to oblige us to understand it in a limited sense, as has been proved before:

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Lev. vi. 13. 'The fire shall ever be burning upon the 'altar, it shall *never* go out;' and in several other places.

Friend. I must allow that the words you mention seem very strong and absolute, but the very reason of things obliges us to limit their meaning to a period or age; but where no such necessity appears, we must understand such words in the most absolute and unlimited sense.

Minister. I think there is as abundant reason from Scripture to limit the time of punishment as any thing whatever; as I trust will appear in the course of our conversation; for which purpose I shall be glad to hear all that you are able to urge against the doctrine of the Restoration.

Friend. The next objection I shall bring is from Job, xxxvi. 18. 'Because there is wrath, beware lest 'he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ran-'som cannot deliver thee.' By which we understand, that after death there is no deliverance, no, not even by that *great ransom* the blood of Christ.

Minister. This would be one of the strongest objections that you have yet advanced, if the words *a great ransom*, had any allusion to the blood of the dear *redeemer*, and if it could be fairly demonstrated, that it can have no power over the dead; but I apprehend, when you read and consider the text, context, and similar passages, you will see that no such thing is intended.

Job had frequently wished for death in his trouble and anguish, (as many persons foolishly and wickedly do, that have never felt the tenth part of his afflictions) for which Elihu justly reproves him in these words: 'Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee 'away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot 'deliver thee' from death and the grave; from being cut off by the hand of Heaven, justly provoked by thy rashness. 'Will he esteem thy riches?' Will he account thy great riches a ransom for thy life? 'No, 'not gold, nor all the forces of strength:' Wouldest

thou give ever ſo much of the precious ore to ranſom thy life it would be unavailable; or ſhouldeſt thou truſt in thy ſtrength of body or mind; ſhouldeſt thou plead the readineſs of thy wit, the ſtrength and greatneſs of thy judgment, memory, and other faculties; thy benevolence of diſpoſition, thy uſefulneſs in life, thy numerous connections, the great honours that await thee; wert thou a monarch, and couldeſt thou command armies and valiant hoſts, ſtrong and mighty; all theſe things would be totally diſregarded by God, if he, provoked by thy raſhneſs, ſhould give thee thy wiſh, and iſſue the *death warrant* againſt thy life: therefore, conſidering theſe things, 'Deſire not the night '(of death, and eſpecially ſudden death) when peop'e 'are cut off in their place;' and there is no remedy, no ranſom, no diſcharge in that war; from which neither power, wiſdom, might, riches, honours, wickedneſs, nor even virtue, can deliver. 'Take heed, re-'gard not iniquity:' do not ſin in any wiſe, and eſpecially do not raſhly wiſh for death; which is very preſumptuous and heaven-daring; 'for this thou haſt 'choſen, rather than affliction.' See Job, xxxvi. 18---21. This is evidently the plain meaning of the text, and is confirmed by Pſalm xlix. 6---9. 'They that 'truſt in their wealth, and boaſt themſelves in the mul-'titude of their riches, none of them can, by any 'means, redeem his brother, nor give to God a ran-'ſom for him: (for the redemption of their ſoul is 'precious, and it ceaſeth for ever) that he ſhould live 'for ever, and not ſee corruption.' But though the power of wealth, wiſdom, and ſtrength, are not ſufficient to buy a ſhort reprieve from death, yet the power of God is able to ranſom therefrom, and to redeem from the grave, or hell, as I have noticed before, and which is expreſſed in the laſt mentioned Pſalm, in the following terms; 'But God will redeem my ſoul 'from the power of the grave, for he ſhall receive me.' Ver. 15. And by the ſame parity of reaſoning, that the power of the HIGHEST is able alſo to redeem or ranſom the bodies of men from the grave, after they have

have perished there, he is able also to redeem souls from sin and misery, if it be his pleasure; and, by the blood of the MESSIAH's covenant, to send forth his prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water, not even a drop to cool the tongues of those who are tormented there. I have, therefore, no doubt but the blood of Christ is able to redeem to the uttermost, and is sufficient to destroy the power of sin, death, and hell.---Nothing in the text on which your objection is founded, can depreciate the merit of that cleansing, all-powerful blood, by proving that it cannot be effectual to lost souls.

FRIEND. But have you forgot that the Scripture says ---'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with 'thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor 'knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou 'goest. And if the tree fall toward the south, or to-'ward the north; in the place where the tree falleth, 'there it shall be?' Eccles. ix. 10. xi. 3.

MINISTER. No; I have not forgot that such passages are found in the Bible; and I believe they were written with a design to make us diligent, and wisely improve our time and talents; and that we should be liberal in giving alms, which seems especially to be the meaning of the last, if we may judge by the connection in which it is found, and without which I am not able to say what it intends: but, in this case, they do not appear to me to be any thing to the purpose, one way or the other; and yet no Scriptures are more frequently brought than these against the doctrine of the Restoration of all things; but commonly accompanied with some additions, such as, 'There is no repentance 'in the grave, nor pardon offered to the dead.' And 'As death leaves us, so judgment finds us.' Words that I have never found in the Bible; but were they repeated ever so often, could not affect this argument; since the general Restoration cannot happen till long after the last judgment, and will not be wholly compleated till the time of the creation of the new heavens,

vens and earth, wherein righteouſneſs alone ſhall dwell.

We all know, that the grave is a place of inactivity, where there is no *work*, *device*, *knowledge*, nor *wiſdom*; and it is a ſtate to which we ſhall ſoon be brought; and, therefore, we ought to be diligent and induſtrious now: but thoſe who believe in the immortality of the *ſoul*, will not undertake to prove from theſe words, that it has no *knowledge*, or *wiſdom*, after it leaves the body; ſince many of them ſay, that the ſoul knows much more in one hour after that event takes place, than in the whole period of its exiſtence before. And as for thoſe who believe that man dies *wholly*, and ſleeps in the grave until the reſurrection, they can never bring this text with any conſiſtency againſt the final Reſtoration of all men: becauſe, let what will be the ſtate of things in the grave, nothing can prevent our Saviour from raiſing all at laſt, and changing them finally for the better, if ſuch be his pleaſure. I might, therefore, juſt as well attempt, from the viiith and xivth chapters of Job, to prove, that there ſhall be *no reſurrection of the dead from their graves*, notwithſtanding the numerous promiſes of that grand event, as any perſon to prove, from theſe and ſimilar paſſages, that *all men ſhall not be finally reſtored*; ſince what is ſaid in thoſe chapters ſeems ten times more againſt the *former*, than any thing that can be urged from theſe is againſt the *latter*. The doctrine of the general *reſurrection* of the juſt and unjuſt, and a ſtate of *rewards* for the former, and *puniſhments* for the latter, according to their works, and alſo the *ſubjection*, *final reconciliation*, and *re-union of* ALL *things in* CHRIST, are all expreſsly revealed, and are made the ſubject of prophecies, threatenings, and promiſes; and are all truths that cannot be overthrown by any reaſonings, as they are plainly declared by God himſelf.

The Scripture, in abundance of places, highly recommends liberality; and, in the moſt poſitive manner, aſſures the bounteous, that they ſhall be bleſſed; I need

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not recite paſſages to prove what is ſo univerſally known and confeſſed. Solomon, therefore, having given many excellent precepts to direct us in other matters, comes to exhort us to be bountiful and liberal in diſtributing to the neceſſities of others what God hath bleſſed us withal, ſaying, 'Caſt thy bread upon 'the waters; for thou ſhalt find it after many days. 'Give a portion to ſeven, and alſo to eight; for thou 'knoweſt not what evil ſhall be upon the earth. If 'the clouds be full of rain, they empty themſelves 'upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the ſouth, 'or toward the north, in the place where the tree fall-'eth, there it ſhall be.' Thereby intimating to us, that as certainly as theſe plain common obſervations are true, (than which nothing can be more ſo) ſhall they who beſtow liberally upon the poor and needy, be rewarded, ſince God has promiſed, and he will perform. Solomon then goes on upon the ſame ſubject, and intimates to us, by two ſtriking metaphors, that if we wait till no difficulties appear in our way to hinder us from performing our duty, we ſhall never reap the bleſſing; and after giving us to underſtand, that God has many ſecret ways of working, far above our comprehenſion, and can therefore bleſs and reward us in many ways out of our own ſight, or the view of others, and yet no leſs certainly than children are conceived, nouriſhed, and receive life in the womb, though we know not how; he comes to give us a warm and preſſing exhortation to be conſtant in doing good to all, according to our power; and to be ſo far from concluding that to be loſt that we thus beſtow, that we ought to conſider alms as ſeed ſown in a fruitful ſoil, and ſhould, with patience, wait for the glorious harveſt when, through the divine bleſſing, we may expect to reap an hundred fold.

All this is plain and eaſy: but how any text in this beautiful chain ſhould ever have been thought to have any alluſion to the ſtate of ſouls departed, or brought as a proof that no alteration can take place after death, I cannot conceive. But, allowing it to have any relation

tion at all to a future ſtate, it cannot then in the leaſt diſprove, that very material changes may happen to ſouls in the ſpiritual world, ſince a tree cut down by its owner, lies not long in the ſame poſition in which it falls, but is applied to various uſes, according to its fitneſs and his pleaſure. But as this is nothing to the purpoſe, I think I have taken too much pains here already; and I ſhould have ſaid little or nothing upon this part of the objection, were it not continually urged, as though the whole controverſy turned and terminated upon this alluſion, than which nothing ſeems farther from the meaning of the text, which, in its true ſenſe, appears to be this---That, as certainly as full clouds muſt empty themſelves upon the terraqueous globe, and that every thing is *what it is*, and *where it is*, and no where elſe, and as a tree falling to the ſouth, does not fall and lie to the north, and, *vice verſa*, ſo, with the ſame certainty, ſhall liberality be bleſt and rewarded.

Friend. I have nothing to object to what you have ſaid upon the text; it appears natural. I formerly thought it intended, that as perſons were laid in the grave ſo they ſhould riſe, and that there could be no change after death; but I am fully convinced, that this belongs not to the ſubject. But there is another paſſage in the book of Eccleſiaſtes, (chap. ix. 4---6.) that I ſhould be glad to hear your opinion of---'For to 'him that is joined to all the living there is hope; for 'a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the liv-'ing know that they muſt die: but the dead know not 'any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for 'the memory of them is forgotten. Alſo their love 'and their hatred, and their envy is now periſhed: 'neither have they any more a portion for ever, in any 'thing that is done under the ſun.'

Miniſter. It is evident that the wiſe man in this and many other of his obſervations, only conſidered things with reſpect to the preſent life, without any regard to a future ſtate. In this view, his declarations are conſiſtent with truth, but in no other. Let the following

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ſerve as a ſpecimen---'No man knoweth either love 'or hatred, by all that is before them. All things 'come alike to all; there is one event to the righ-'teous and to the wicked, to the good, and to the 'clean, and to the unclean; to him that ſacrificeth, 'and to him that ſacrificeth not; as is the good, ſo is 'the ſinner, and he that ſweareth, as he that feareth 'an oath.' Ver. 1, 2. Nothing could poſſibly be more falſe than theſe obſervations, applied to a future ſtate, though they are generally true in this life: for if there are no future rewards and puniſhments, no ſtate of retribution hereafter, there is an end to all religion. But he does not finally leave the matter ſo; but makes a moſt excellent concluſion to this book, ſaying---

'Let us hear the concluſion of the whole matter: 'Fear (*or* revere) God, and keep his commandments, 'for this is the whole duty of man. For God ſhall 'bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret 'thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.' Chap. xii. 13, 14.

Thus it is plain, that a living dog is better (more uſeful in this world) than a dead lion, which is no longer capable of doing good or evil; that a man, when he dies, loſes all hopes of enjoyment in this life, and is rendered incapable of exerciſing the functions of it any longer; has no more a portion in any thing belonging thereto. Thus, in fine, all the obſervations that can be fairly made, upon this and ſimilar paſſages, belong entirely to the preſent ſtate of things; and therefore do not at all affect the argument, either one way or the other.

Friend. This is ſo plain, that nothing can be more ſo; but our Saviour's words (St. John, ix. 4.) deſerve a particular conſideration---'I muſt work the works of 'him that ſent me, while it is day; the night cometh, 'when no man can work;' which is explained commonly of the night of death, when no more works can be wrought.

Minister. Our Lord was diligent in his labour; he conſtantly went about doing good; he was never idle; he

he was in haſte, till he had finiſhed the work which his father had given him to do. In this he was, as in every thing elſe, a glorious pattern and example for us! And oh, that we might follow him! Now we may feed the hungry, give drink to the thirſty, clothe the naked, be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame; may take in the ſtranger, relieve the diſtreſſed, viſit the ſick, the fatherleſs, widows, and priſoners in their affliction; may bury the dead, and conſtantly perform works of benevolence and mercy, while we remain in this ſtate of our exiſtence; which, if we here neglect, we never can perform at all, and, of conſequence, never obtain the rewards which are promiſed to the obedient: but as it is not the ſtate of rewards and puniſhments that we are now diſcourſing about, but a ſtate beyond---even the Reſtoration of all things; neither is the diſpute about what *men* can do after this life, but what *God* can do, or what he has purpoſed to do with and for them in the ages to come, after the dreadful ſentence is paſt; whether they ſhall be left under the ſame *while God exiſts*, or whether they ſhall be annihilated; this, you know, is the ſtate of the queſtion: ſome hold the *firſt*, and others the *laſt*: but I am apt to think both theſe opinions are extremes, and therefore judge it ſafeſt to maintain the *ſecond*, which I take to be the medium here.

Friend. Indeed I am convinced, that no circumſtance preceding the general judgment, can affect the argument; becauſe we are informed, that the condemnation of the wicked ſhall be at that day; then God will render to them according to their deeds, and will ſay to them, *Depart from me*, &c.---But the following texts of Scripture form a ſtrong objection to the Univerſal Reſtoration, which I would wiſh you well to conſider.

'The expectation of the wicked ſhall periſh, and the 'hypocrites hope ſhall periſh---whoſe hope ſhall be 'cut off, and whoſe truſt ſhall be a ſpider's web. He 'ſhall lean upon his houſe, but it ſhall not ſtand; he 'ſhall hold it faſt, but it ſhall not endure. The hea-

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'ven ſhall reveal his iniquity, and the earth ſhall riſe 'up againſt him. The eyes of the wicked ſhall fail, 'and they ſhall not eſcape: and their hope ſhall be as 'the giving up of the ghoſt. His confidence ſhall be 'rooted out of his tabernacle, and it ſhall bring him 'to the king of terrors. For what is the hope of the 'wicked, though he hath gained, when God taketh 'away his ſoul? Will God hear his cry, when trou-'ble cometh upon him? He that, being often re-'proved, hardeneth his neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroy-'ed, and that without remedy. When a wicked man 'dieth, his expectation ſhall periſh; and the hope of 'unjuſt men periſheth. Becauſe I have called, and ye 'have refuſed; I have ſtretched out my hand, and no 'man regarded; but ye have ſet at nought all my 'counſel, and would none of my reproof: I alſo will 'laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear 'cometh; when your fear cometh as a deſolation, and 'your deſtruction cometh as a whirlwind; when diſ-'treſs and anguiſh come upon you: then ſhall they 'call upon me, but I will not anſwer; they ſhall ſeek 'me early, but they ſhall not find me: for that they 'hated knowledge, and did not chooſe the fear of 'JEHOVAH. They would none of my counſel; they 'deſpiſed all my reproof. Therefore ſhall they eat of 'the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their 'own devices.' Prov. x. 28. Job, viii. 13---15. xx. 27. xi. 20. xviii. 14. xxvii. 8, 9. Prov. xxix. 1. xi. 7. i. 24---31.

Theſe, and abundance of other ſimilar paſſages, declare the future ſtate of the wicked to be deſperate, without hope; they and their hopes periſh together, as the ſpi-der's web; they have no hopes or proſpect of being redeemed; they can look for nothing but judgment and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour them as ſtub-ble fully dry, and as thorns cut up ſhall they be burned in the fire. Solomon ſays, 'The expectation of the 'wicked is wrath.' Prov. xi. 23. 'As he loved curſ-'ing, ſo ſhall it come unto him; as he delighted not 'in bleſſing, ſo ſhall it be far from him. As he cloath-'ed himſelf with curſing, like as with his garment; ſo

'shall it come into his bowels like water, and like oil 'into his bones.' Pfalm cix. 17, 18. Indeed he can have no hopes, when he conſiders that he hath neglected ſo great ſalvation all his life; that he hath ſet at nought God's counſels, deſpiſed his reproofs: that when his Creator called to him to turn, he had no ears to hear his voice; and therefore, when ſorrow ſhall overtake, though he may cry, he ſhall not be regarded of God; and though he may ſeek, he ſhall not find: the maſter of the houſe having riſen up, and ſhut to the door, all knocking for entrance is in vain, even though ſuch were to plead for admittance in the moſt earneſt manner, ſaying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us;' he ſhall anſwer, 'I know you not, whence you are.' And though they may reiterate, and expoſtulate, ſaying, 'We have eaten and drank in thy preſence, and thou 'haſt taught in our ſtreets;" he ſhall not be moved, but ſhall ſay to them, 'I tell you, I know you not, 'whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of 'iniquity.----There ſhall be weeping, and gnaſhing of 'teeth, when they ſhall ſee Abraham, and Iſaac, and 'Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, 'and they themſelves thruſt out.' St. Luke, xiii. 25 ---28. See alſo, St. Matth. vii. 21---23. xxv. 11, 12.

Minister. Theſe are awful warnings, indeed; and were they attended to as they ought to be, would be ſufficient, one would think, to deter men from their evil ways. I am glad that you have ſtated them in this moſt ſtriking point of light; for though they form no real objection to my views of God's dealing with men, as I underſtand the Scriptures, they are an inſuperable bar to the opinions of thoſe who deny a future ſtate of retribution, which I think impoſſible for them to anſwer fairly. I ſhall, however, notice briefly ſome things in this collection of Scriptures, in order that my ſentiments may appear in their true light.

1. All the hopes of the wicked, ungodly, and hypocrites, ſhall periſh at their death.

Perhaps they hoped to have lived long, to have enjoyed health, wealth, pleaſure, and all worldly good, for

for many years; to have ſeen their children for many generations, flouriſhing for a long time on earth; but death deſtroys theſe hopes.

The hypocrites might have hoped that they ſhould have been accepted with God on the account of their birth, parentage, profeſſion, rank among the people of God, obſervation of the externals of religion, &c. &c. all of which vain hopes do certainly periſh at death.

The profane and wicked infidel, and practical atheiſt, might have hoped either to have ceaſed to exiſt, or to have found ſome way of eſcaping the threatened puniſhment; but death deſtroys theſe hopes alſo.

2. Whatever may be the final intention of God towards theſe miſerable creatures, it is evident they are ſhut up in a ſtate of keen tormenting deſpair, or dreadful ſuſpenſe, and may be fully perſuaded that they ſhall never be releaſed, of which it is likely they may not have even the moſt diſtant hope, or the leaſt degree of knowledge; but, on the contrary, be in fearful expectation of more terrible puniſhment hereafter.

3. As they have lived and died in ſin, their deſtruction, or miſery, is certain; and there is no remedy, that can prevent their experiencing the conſequences of their crimes, and ſuffering the juſt puniſhment which ſhall be inflicted on them, according to their different deſerts.

4. They who live and die in rebellion againſt God, will be eternally deprived of the glories and honours of the kingdom of Chriſt, which otherwiſe they might have poſſeſſed; will be excluded from a ſhare in the firſt reſurrection, and will be expoſed to ſuffer the torments of the ſecond death; which all muſt inevitably ſuffer, who remain incorrigible till the great day of judgment.

5. As God hath called, and they have refuſed, it is but reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that they, in their turn, ſhall cry in vain; yet, nevertheleſs, though he may long delay, he may hear their cries, and deliver them at laſt. See Pſalm cvii. 13---16.

David, in Pſalm xxxiv. ſays, 'The face of JEHOVAH 'is againſt them that do evil, to cut off the remem-'brance of them from the earth.' Our tranſlators not underſtanding, or not entertaining an idea of the future Reſtoration, add, '*The righteous* cry, and JEHO-'VAH heareth, and delivereth them out of all their 'troubles;' whereas the Holy Ghoſt has put no ſuch words as *the righteous* into the text there; but after ſaying, that the face of JEHOVAH is againſt them that do evil, to deſtroy them out of the world, and to make them forgotten, and their names to ceaſe upon the earth, it adds a word that ſignifies *crying*, and then ſays, 'And JEHOVAH heareth, and delivereth them 'out of all their troubles.' See ver. 16, 17. This ſeems, indeed, like the doctrine of the Bible, which elſewhere ſays, ſpeaking of the notoriouſly wicked---'O my God, make them like a wheel: as the ſtubble 'before the wind. As the fire burneth the wood, and 'as the flame ſetteth the mountains on fire, ſo perſe-'cute them with thy tempeſt, and make them afraid 'with thy ſtorm. Fill their faces with ſhame, that 'they may ſeek thy name, O JEHOVAH. Let them be 'confounded, and troubled for ever; yea, let them be 'put to ſhame and periſh. And they ſhall know' (as the Hebrew word ſignifies, and as it is rendered in the old tranſlation) 'that thou, whoſe name alone is 'JEHOVAH, art the Moſt High over all the earth.' Pſalm lxxxiii. 13---18. Here we ſee, in a beautiful and clear manner, that one grand deſign of God in bringing judgments, and even what is called utter deſtruction, upon men, is that they may know that he is JEHOVAH, the true God; and there are but few intelligent Chriſtians but muſt, in ſome meaſure, be able to conceive hopes concerning all thoſe to whom the knowledge of God is promiſed.

Though the threatenings in the prophecy of Ezekiel, both againſt the Jews and other nations, are uncommonly ſevere, yet they frequently cloſe with this gracious promiſe---'And they ſhall know that I am 'JEHOVAH'---

'JEHOVAH'---or something similar; as will evidently appear to those who will be at the pains of examining the following passages in that book---

Ezekiel, vi. 7, 10, 13, 14. vii. 4, 9, 27. xi. 10, 12. xii. 15, 16, 20. xiii. 9, 14, 21, 23. xiv. 8. xv. 7. xvi. 62. xx. 12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44. xxii. 16. xxiii. 49. xxiv. 24, 27. xxv. 5, 7, 11, 17. xxvi. 6. xxviii. 22, 23, 24, 26. xxix. 6, 9, 16, 21. xxx. 8, 19, 25, 26. xxxii. 15. xxxiii. 29. xxxiv. 27. xxxv. 4, 9, 12, 15. xxxvi. 11, 23, 38. xxxvii. 6, 13. xxxviii. 23. xxxix. 6, 7, 22, 28.

FRIEND. But does not punishment harden and inflame offenders, instead of softening and humbling them? As we read, Isaiah, viii. 21. 'They shall curse their king 'and their God, and look upward.' And in Rev. xvi. 9---11. 'And men were scorched with great heat, and 'blasphemed the name of God, which hath power 'over these plagues; and they repented not to give 'him glory. And they gnawed their tongues for 'pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of 'their pains and their sores; and repented not of their 'deeds.'

MINISTER. Punishment, to a certain degree, inflames and enrages in a most amazing manner; but continued longer, and heavier, produces a contrary effect---softens, humbles, and subdues. When Ephraim of old bemoaned himself, he said thus---'Thou hast chast-'ised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccus-'tomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be 'turned; for thou art JEHOVAH my God.' Jer. xxxi. 18. The metaphor here used expresses, in a most lively manner, the different effects of the same discipline, in its beginning, progress, and end. When a bullock first has the yoke laid on his neck, he frets, tosses, and rages exceedingly; but, by a continuance of the discipline, he is subdued, brought down, humbled, and tamed, so as to become the most useful and gentle of animals. The sons of Zion are represented as lying 'at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull 'in a net; full of the fury of JEHOVAH, the rebuke of

'God.' Iſaiah, li. 20. A wild bull in a net muſt be a furious creature; ſo are men when firſt they are brought under the divine correction. But God knows how to correct men, in ſuch a manner as to bring them to ſubmit to him in due time; and though ſome are ſo ſunk in ſin as not to be reformed, by any means, in this life, yet that is no argument, that God is not able to ſubdue and bring down the proud and moſt rebellious, in another ſtate, by means that may be uſed effectually there, though they could not be uſed here. God ſays, by the prophet, to Iſrael, 'Becauſe I have 'purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt 'not be purged from thy filthineſs any more till I have 'cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee. So will I make 'my fury towards thee to reſt, and my jealouſy ſhall 'depart from thee; and I will be quiet, and will be 'no more angry.' Ezek. xxiv. 13. xvi. 42. Some ſins are ſo daring and preſumptuous, as to provoke God to threaten, that they ſhall not be purged away in this life; and, perhaps, their malignancy may be ſo great, that nothing that can be uſed here, is able to ſubdue them: thus, when God threatened his people of old with deſtruction, they turned his threatenings into ridicule: inſtead of weeping, mourning, baldneſs, and girding with ſackcloth, to which God called them, there was nothing but 'joy and 'gladneſs, ſlaying oxen, and killing ſheep, eating 'fleſh, and drinking wine: Let us eat and drink, for 'to-morrow we die. And it was revealed in mine 'ears by JEHOVAH of hoſts, Surely, this iniquity ſhall 'not be purged from you till ye die, ſaith JEHOVAH, 'God of Iſrael.' Iſaiah, xxii. 12---14.

Thus, puniſhments are deſigned for the humbling of the proud; but if they fail of anſwering that purpoſe, as adminiſtered in the preſent ſtate, they will be continued and increaſed, in future periods, to ſuch a degree, as ſhall bring all down in due time. Thoſe pains which produced that rage and blaſphemy which you mentioned, were all poured out on hardened ſinners in the preſent life; and were ſo terrible and ſevere as to produce

produce thoſe fearful effects, but not ſufficiently ſo as to produce the contrary.

That puniſhment, to a certain degree, produces rage, but to a certain degree beyond, produces ſubmiſſion, may be illuſtrated by the following fact, as well as many others of the ſame nature.

In the former war between England France, there was one Mr. M------, of Virginia, who was waggon-maſter general in the army of the Provincials. He was guilty of abuſing his power, by frequently ſtriking the ſoldiers with his waggon-whip. Complaint being made, a court-martial was held, and he was ſentenced to receive five hundred laſhes; which ſentence was executed upon him. When firſt he began to feel the laſh, he was exceedingly enraged, and curſed thoſe who had thus ſentenced him; ſwearing, that, if he lived to be releaſed, he would kill them all, if poſſible; for that he valued not his life in the leaſt, but would revenge this diſgrace by killing them, wherever he found them; and much more to the ſame purpoſe. But before he had received half his puniſhment, he declared, that he had not the leaſt diſpoſition to lift his hand againſt them; he ſaw clearly that they had acted right; that he had been entirely to blame; and that his puniſhment was juſt. After his correction was over, he was led quietly away, entirely cured of all his rage, from which he was as much freed by his puniſhment, as ever an effect was produced by a cauſe. He was healed of his wounds, and, I think, reſtored to his poſt. Some time after the war was over, he was paſſing one day over thoſe mountains in Virginia, commonly called *The Blue Ridge*, and there he met alone one of the men who had condemned him, in the court-martial, to ſuch a puniſhment. He put him in mind of it; and told him, that it was now in his power to retaliate upon him. The other acknowledged that he was in his power; but added, 'M------, you 'know you did wrong, and deſerved the puniſhment 'you received; and, if you kill me, I declare that 'we did right in ſentencing you to be whipped; I 'ſhould

'should do the same, were it to do again; and so 'would you have done, had you been in my place.' Mr. M------ acknowledged the truth of it; and was so far from fulfilling his threatenings, that he suffered him to go in peace, highly commending him for his conduct. Mr. M------- may be still living: he was a general in the American army during the late war, and acquired great honour for his valour and good conduct.

This, I think, is an argument *ad hominem*. I have often observed instances of the same nature, in a less degree; and I think it must be admitted, that although a certain degree of punishment will inflame, harden, and enrage, yet farther degrees produce quite contrary effects. Nor is punishment the only thing in nature that produces contrary effects, according to the quantity used; almost all things do the same. Thus water, with a little salt in it, will cause putrefaction much sooner than perfectly fresh water; but let it be saturated with salt, and it will preserve bodies that are cast therein. A little salt cast on the earth is good manure, and causes fruitfulness; but a greater quantity produces a contrary effect, by causing barrenness. A little wine refreshes, cheers, invigorates; but, taken to excess, stupifies and intoxicates. And, to mention no more instances, a little smattering of knowledge puffs up the mind; but a greater degree, humbles and brings it down: from whence,

'Drink deep, or never taste the spring.'

Friend. But, let me ask you, when you view the miserable state of fallen men, the inveterate obstinacy of their wills, the total aversion that many have to God and goodness, their confirmed habits of evil, their amazing love of vice, their opposition to every method taken to reclaim them, and a thousand other dreadful circumstances, which you must have observed, are you not ready to despair of their recovery? not for want of any goodness in God, but through their total incapacity of ever being made better.

Minister.

Minister. I muſt confeſs, this objection has great weight: and this is the only way I anſwer it to my own ſatisfaction---God hath ſworn, that to him every knee ſhall bow, every tongue ſhall ſwear. Iſaiah, xlv. 23.---That in the name of Jeſus every knee ſhall bow of things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue ſhall confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 10, 11.---That it is the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf, in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of times, to gather together, or rehead, in one, all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him. Epheſ. i. 9, 10.---And having made peace through the blood of his croſs, he is determined to reconcile all things unto himſelf, whether things in heaven, or things on earth. Col. i. 20.---That he worketh all things after the counſel of his own will. Eph. i. 11.---That he will have all men to be ſaved, or reſtored, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 1 Tim. ii. 6.---That the Father loveth the ſon, and hath given all things into his hands. St. John, iii. 35.---And that Chriſt hath ſaid, 'All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come unto me; and him that 'cometh unto me, I will in nowiſe caſt out.' St. John, vi. 37.---When I conſider theſe, and many ſuch like promiſes, which I find in the Scriptures; and that he that hath promiſed is able to perform; hath wiſdom, power, and goodneſs ſufficient to accompliſh all his words, how difficult or impoſſible ſoever the matter may ſeem to our carnal, vain, and weak reaſoning, I caſt the whole of my concern upon him, judging that he is faithful who hath promiſed, and that, in his own time, he will fulfil all his purpoſes, and all his promiſes. But I confeſs to you, that it requires a faith, if poſſible, more ſtrong than that of Abraham, to believe the doctrine of the Reſtoration ſtedfaſtly, in the midſt of ſo much evil as prevails in the world, and which ſeems to render it impoſſible; but my only hope is in God.

But,

But, to encourage us the more, there are not only promiſes of what God will do, but examples of what he hath done, recorded in Scripture; as the caſes of Manaſſeh, Nebuchadnezzar, Mary Magdalen, Saul, and many of the murderers of our Lord, prieſts, and even phariſees, are left on record as patterns of God's long-ſuffering, power, mercy, and love. And I would adviſe thoſe Chriſtians that doubt of the Univerſal Reconciliation of all things, to remember St. Paul's words to the Coloſſians on this ſubject, chap. i. 21.--- 'And you that were ſometime alienated, and enemies 'in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he 'reconciled,' as a proof and example of his power to reconcile all things. Let all remember their own ſtubbornneſs; and then, inſtead of reviling and deriding a truth which God has revealed, they will adore him, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things: who 'doeth according to his will in the army of 'heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; 'and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, What 'doeſt thou?' Rom. xi, 36. Dan. iv. 35.

Friend. But allowing that God has power to change the hearts of the vileſt of men, is not the exerciſe of that power evidently limited? for I find it written in Rev. xxii. 11. 'He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt 'ſtill; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill; and 'he that is righteous, let him be righteous ſtill; and he 'that is holy, let him be holy ſtill.' By theſe words it ſeems to be intimated, that the characters of both the wicked and the righteous, ſhall, at ſome period, be ſo confirmed and fixed, as to admit of no change or alteration.

Minister. This appears to be a conſiderable difficulty, but can by no means overthrow the ſyſtem of the Reſtoration, which is eſtabliſhed upon many gracious promiſes. The words ſeem to refer to a particular period, even when the Lord ſhall come, and ſhew that his coming will not, (as ſome ſuppoſe) change the characters of men; but that all ſhall continue, for a certain time, in the ſame character as before. But though

though 'he that is unjuſt, ſhall be unjuſt ſtill: and he 'that is filthy, ſhall be filthy ſtill*'---during the age of judgment, and ſhall have the dreadful curſe pronounced upon him, for 'If any man love not the Lord Jeſus 'Chriſt, let him be anathema, Maran-atha;' that is, Accurſed, the Lord cometh. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. yet I truſt that I have proved that the vileſt ſhall be finally changed, and, conſequeetly, that theſe words muſt be underſtood with ſome limitation. And thus, though this text is plainly contrary to the opinion of thoſe who ſuppoſe that all the human race ſhall be admitted into the kingdom of heaven at the day of judgment, yet it may be well reconciled to the ſyſtem laid down in theſe Dialogues; eſpecially if it can be proved that ſimilar expreſſions are uſed where a limitation is ſuppoſed, or neceſſarily implied.

Friend. Yes; if you can find ſimilar expreſſions uſed for limited times, it will be ſatisfactory.

Minister. St. Paul ſays, 1 Cor. xiv. 38. 'But if 'any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant:' but we can hardly ſuppoſe that he meant without limitation. So we read of the Jews, that 'God hath given them 'the ſpirit of ſlumber; eyes that they ſhould not ſee, 'and ears that they ſhould not hear, unto this day.' And David ſaith, 'Let their table be made a ſnare, 'and a trap, and a ſtumbling-block, and a recompence 'unto them. Let their eyes be darkened that they 'ſhould not ſee, and bow down their back ALWAY.' Rom. xi. 8---10. Theſe expreſſions of their remaining in a blinded, hardened, and reprobate ſtate, are ſtronger than thoſe---'He that is unjuſt, let him be

* It has long appeared to me, that Rev. xxii. 11. relates to the cloſing up of Scripture, and implies at once the ſufficiency of the means which God has afforded for the ſalvation of men, and that he will not afford any further means in the preſent ſtate; but men in the *age to come* ſhall abide the conſequence of their conduct in the *preſent age*. In this view of the words they are very ſolemn and important: God cloſes the whole revelation of his will by ſaying to men, that they ſhall be judged according to the words which he hath ſpoken to them.

'unjuſt

'unjuſt ſtill,' &c. for inſtead of *ſtill* the word *alway* is uſed; and yet we are informed, that this 'blindneſs 'in part has (only) happened to Iſrael, until the ful-'neſs of the gentiles be come in: and ſo all Iſrael ſhall 'be ſaved.' And that God hath concluded them all '(*or* ſhut them up together) in unbelief, that he might 'have mercy upon all,' even all whom he had ſhut up or concluded in unbelief. And, as I obſerved before, David ſays, 'Fill their faces with ſhame, that they 'may ſeek thy name, O JEHOVAH. Let them be con-'founded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put 'to ſhame and periſh, that *they* may know that thou, 'whoſe name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Moſt High 'over all the earth.' Pſalm lxxxiii. 16---18. Many other ſimilar paſſages might be mentioned; but theſe may ſuffice to ſhew, that often where the words *let it*, or *let them be*, in ſuch and ſuch a ſtate, they only intend a certain period, until another diſpenſation takes place. As for righteouſneſs, holineſs, and happineſs, they have quite a different foundation from ſin and impurity, as I have ſhewn before; and therefore, no arguments uſed in favour of the total deſtruction of evil, can in the leaſt prove that goodneſs, which is the divine eſſence, ſhall ceaſe, but the contrary; and thoſe who are firmly joined to the Lord, and have continued with him through the ſtate of temptation, ſhall never ceaſe to be righteous, nor be ſeparated from their head, from whom they ſhall derive eternal life: for Chriſt hath ſaid, 'Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.' St. John, xiv. 19.

Chriſt, at his coming, will bring every hidden thing to light, and ſhall take off all diſguiſes; ſo that he that is unjuſt, ſhall appear unjuſt; and he that is filthy ſhall be diſcovered: hypocriſy ſhall be no more. 'The 'vile perſon ſhall be no more called liberal, nor the 'churl ſaid to be bountiful.' Iſaiah, xxxii. 5. 'Then 'ſhall ye return, and diſcern between the righteous 'and the wicked, and between him that ſerveth God, 'and him that ſerveth him not.' Mal. iii. 18. The judgment of God is according to truth, and is deſigned

to

to make an entire diſcovery of all perſons, and all ſecret things, 'that every mouth may be ſtopped, and 'all the world may become guilty before God.' Rom. iii. 19. But though judgment has its great uſe in diſcovering, laying open, convincing, and condemning---and puniſhment, in deſtroying, ſubduing, and humbling---yet the powerful, ſaving grace of God, and the operation of the divine ſpirit, muſt have the glory of reſtoring, or creating men anew; and the blood of Jeſus muſt cleanſe their ſouls from the guilt and pollution of ſin. Evil muſt be deſtroyed out of them: this is done by afflictions; and goodneſs muſt be reſtored; this is done by God's renewing power and grace.

But the objection may be anſwered another way, without any of this reaſoning, by conſidering the ſubject comparatively. Thus---As God only is holy---as none are good but he, in an abſolute ſenſe---as he putteth no truſt in his holy ones, and the heavens are not clean in his ſight, and his angels he charged with folly (ſee Job, xv. 15. iv. 18.)---and as all intelligences, compared with him, are unjuſt and unclean---ſo, thoſe who have lived and died in rebellion againſt God, and in the pollution of ſin, may remain unjuſt and filthy, compared with the ſaints, thoſe veſſels of honour and glory, who have purged themſelves. 'But 'in a great houſe there are not only veſſels of gold and 'ſilver, but alſo of wood and of earth, and ſome to 'honour, and ſome to diſhonour. If a man therefore 'purge himſelf from theſe (ſins), he ſhall be a veſſel 'of honour, ſanctified and meet for the maſter's uſe, 'and prepared unto every good work.' 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21. Here we may obſerve, that in our Lord's great houſe there ſhall be divers veſſels of various kinds, yet all uſeful, but ſome more highly ſo than others; that honour and diſhonour are comparative terms; and that the way to become veſſels of the higheſt honour at laſt, is to purge ourſelves from iniquity while on earth, by obeying the truth. For it muſt appear evi-

dent, from the nature of things, that there will always be an immenſe difference between thoſe who ſhall be kings and prieſts to God, and thoſe who ſhall be ſubdued in the ages to come, ſo as to be ſubjects, but who ſhall not attain to that honour and glory, which they ſhall have who ſuffer with Chriſt here, and ſhall be glorified with him hereafter.

Friend. Since I have converſed with you I muſt acknowledge that many things have appeared in a different light from what they did before; and if I do not wholly embrace the doctrine of the Reſtoration, I muſt allow that there is much more to be ſaid for it than I could have imagined. But I have ſtill ſome difficulties that I wiſh to propoſe. There is a terrible threatening, which is indeed the laſt in the Bible, that I ſhould be glad to hear your thoughts upon, which is thus expreſſed, (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.) 'For I teſtify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.' But I can almoſt foreſee how you will anſwer this; that though the plagues that are written in this book ſhall be added, yet mercy ſhall finally rejoice againſt judgment; and though a man's part may be taken out of the book of life, and he, in conſequence, ſuffer the torments of the ſecond death, yet, as the time will come when there ſhall be no more death of any kind, neither ſorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain, his reſtoration may be certainly inferred; and though his part in the heavenly city may be forfeited, ſo that he may never become one of thoſe who ſhall reign therein, nor yet have a conſtant dwelling there; he may nevertheleſs enter as a worſhipper and a ſubject of the great King; and may drink of the water of life, feed on the fruits of the tree

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of life and be healed by its leaves, and be one of the happy inhabitants of the new earth which God will create.

Minister. Yes, my friend: but though this Scripture may be eaſily reconciled to the plan laid down in theſe dialogues, it contains ſuch threatenings as are very terrible indeed, and ſhould make us exceeding careful not to contradict what God hath here revealed, by adding vain interpretations of our own, contrary to the ſenſe of the text; nor in any wiſe to explain away or weaken the force of either the threatenings or promiſes, ſet forth in this wondrous book. The amazing torments which they ſhall feel that have theſe plagues added to them, and the dreadful loſs which they ſhall ſuſtain that have their part taken out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, cannot be even conceived: and it being poſſible to forfeit this glorious portion entirely and for ever, made St. Paul warn the Hebrews in ſuch a ſolemn manner as he doth throughout the whole epiſtle.---Oh, what affecting advice is the following!---'Looking diligently, leſt any man 'fail of the grace of God; leſt any root of bitterneſs 'ſpringing up trouble you, and thereby many be de'filed: leſt there be any fornicator, or profane perſon, 'as Eſau, who, for one morſel of meat, ſold his birth'right. For ye know how that afterward, when he 'would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected; 'for he found no place of repentance, though he ſought it carefully, with tears.' Heb. xii. 15---17.

Thus, though Eſau, as well as Jacob, was bleſſed concerning things to come, (ſee Heb. xi. 20.) yet the birthright, and the particular bleſſings connected therewith, he loſt for ever: and ſo it is poſſible that we may loſe our parts in the holy city, or no ſuch threatenings would ever have been made. For it is a maxim with me, that God never warns where there is no danger to fear; and never encourages us to hope where there is no poſſibility of obtaining.

As the glorious and univerſal deliverance of all men from the bondage of ſin, and their obtaining an inhe-

ritance in the new earth, was clearly pointed out by the great year of jubilee, under the law, in which every ſervant went out free, and every man returned to his poſſeſſion and to his family; (ſee Lev. xxv. 10.) ſo the poſſibility of being cut off from the holy city for ever was pointed out by that notable exception, (ver. 29, 30.) 'And if a man ſell a dwelling-houſe in 'a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole 'year after it is ſold; within a full year may he redeem 'it. And if it be not redeemed within the ſpace of a 'full year, then the houſe that is in the walled city 'ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever to him that bought it, 'throughout his generations; it ſhall not go out in 'the jubilee.'

Something ſimilar to this may be found in Rev. iii. 11. 'Behold, I come quickly; hold that faſt which 'thou haſt, that no man take thy crown.' And the 5th verſe is alſo worthy of conſideration---'He that 'overcometh, the ſame ſhall be clothed in white rai-'ment; and I will not blot his name out of the book 'of life; but I will confeſs his name before my Fa-'ther, and before his angels.' Oh, what promiſes are made to overcomers! That they ſhall eat of the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of God; ſhall have a crown of life; ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond death; ſhall eat of the hidden manna; ſhall have a white ſtone, and a new name, which no man knoweth, ſaving he that receiveth it; ſhall have power over the nations, &c. even as Chriſt received of the Father; ſhall walk with him in white; ſhall be eſteemed worthy to be companions and friends of God; ſhall be clothed in white; ſhall have their names enrolled among the followers of the Lamb, as called, choſen, and faithful; ſhall be confeſſed by the Son of God before his Father and the holy angels; ſhall be made pillars in the temple of God, and ſhall go no more out; ſhall have the name of God written upon their foreheads, and the name of the holy city, New Jeruſalem, and Chriſt's new, heavenly name; ſhall ſit with him upon his throne, even as he overcame, and is ſet down

down with the Father upon his throne; shall inherit all things; shall be called the sons of God. See Rev. ii. 7, 10, 11, 17, 26, 27. iii. 4, 5, 12, 21. xvii. 14. xxi. 7.

The apostle assures us, that 'If (we are) children, 'then (are we) heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs 'with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we 'may be also glorified together.' And then adds--- 'For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time 'are not worthy to be compared with the glory which 'shall be revealed in us.' Rom. viii. 17, 18. 'When 'Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye (his 'saints) also appear with him in glory.' Col. iii. 4. 'We know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like 'him, for we shall see him as he is.' 1 John, iii. 2. But let none of those who believe themselves the heirs of this kingdom, &c. dare to indulge themselves in sin, under a notion that God can never cast them off, as some do.

A preacher, whom I once knew, encouraged this wickedly presumptuous disposition, so far as openly to say, 'God cannot damn me: he can as soon cease to 'be God, as he can cast me off; even though I should 'sin ever so much. If I should kill a man, he could 'not damn me: nay, if I should kill all the men in 'the world, he cannot damn me.' This man was rigid in trifles, religiously scrupulous in frivolous things, such as *dress*, &c. yet he made traffic of the humankind, engaged in war, and performed acts of cruelty and outrage with as little tenderness as may be imagined! He long bloated himself with the notion of God's peculiar favour; but near the close of his life, the displeasure of the Almighty coming visibly upon him, this *rhapsodist* changed his tone, and exclaimed, that God had forsaken him!

I would advise all men of that bold, presuming, self-confident spirit, to read and consider well those words in Jer. xxii. 24. 'As I live, saith JEHOVAH, 'though Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah,

'were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I 'pluck thee thence.'

Consider, first, who speaks: JEHOVAH. He not only speaks, but he confirms his threatening with an oath; and, because he could swear by no greater, he swear by himself, by his own life; 'As I live, saith 'JEHOVAH, though Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, 'king of Judah;' though he is of the family of David, with whom I have made an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; and though he is anointed king over my people, I will not spare him: yea, though he 'were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I 'pluck thee thence.' Signets, upon the hands of ancient Persian monarchs, were those seals with which their decrees were seal'ed and confirmed; so that no man could reverse them. Now, God delares, that if this man was ever so dear, and as necessary, to him, as the signet on the right hand of a king is to its owner; that though he was not able to govern his kingdom without his assistance; though he had been the dearest and most useful thing, he would entirely cast him off for his transgressions. And how much more so, if it be considered, that no man is necessary to God; that man cannot be profitable to him; that neither our wickedness can hurt him, nor our righteousness benefit him; (see Job, xxii. 2, 3. xxxv. 6---8. Psalm, xvi. 2, 3.) and that he threatens to punish the only family that he had known on earth, for all their iniquities. Amos, iii. 2. What have not those to fear who have been placed in high stations, entrusted with precious treasures, great abilities, opportunities, &c. and have abused them! Let such read, and seriously consider, St. Luke, xii. 42---48. St. Matth. xxiv. 45---51. 2 Pet. ii. 20---22.

FRIEND. These considerations are, on one hand, glorious and sublime beyond conception, and, on the other, terrible beyond description. But some say, That if they are only admitted into the kingdom of God, and are not cast into the lake of fire, it is the highest

higheſt of their ambition: that they never aſpire to be kings and prieſts; nor to obtain a crown, throne, ſceptre, &c. And others ſay, that if they are ever, to all eternity, to be delivered from their miſery, that it is a matter of little conſequence to them whether they are followers of Chriſt here or not.

Minister. Theſe kind of reflections are frequent'y thrown out by the enemies of the Reſtoration, to caſt an odium upon the doctrine: but if they were to hear a man ſay, 'If I am juſt ſuffered to enter into this 'kingdom, and am not condemned as a rebel, it is all 'I wiſh; I deſire neither the riches, honours, pleaſures, 'conveniencies, nor even the neceſſaries, that many of 'the inhabitants enjoy: all I aſk is to be exempted 'from the pain and ſhame of public puniſhment:' and another was to add, 'I can ſee little or no difference 'between being made heir apparent to the crown, poſ-'ſeſſing all the privileges, honours, dignities, &c. of a 'prince of the blood, and being hanged, drawn, and 'quartered, for high treaſon: ſince even that puniſh-'ment, painful, and ſhameful as it is, muſt come to an 'end:' I aſk, would they not eſteem both theſe men in a ſtate of inſanity, or worſe---entirely devoid of all ſenſe and reaſon? Yet this unreaſonable language is not worthy to be named in the ſame day with that which you mentioned. The difference is ſo great, I cannot find language to expreſs it. I therefore conſider all ſuch perſons as madmen, with whom it is not worth while to reaſon; who underſtand not what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.

Friend. So they appear to me. But the ſyſtem you have laid down, appears equally calculated to check preſumption and deſpair, and to cure all ſuch ſpiritual madneſs---provided that they will attend to it. But what will you ſay to the doctrine of *annihilation? that* may not be liable to the ſame objections as *endleſs damnation*; and ſo the wicked may be puniſhed with *everlaſting deſtruction*, and deſtroyed, ſoul and body in hell; and yet, at laſt, all beings that are in exiſtence may be made happy. The Scripture ſeems, in many places, to favour

favour this idea, and the works of nature seem to confirm it. For instance, many fruits and animals perish before they arrive at perfection; and why may it not be so with the souls and bodies of men? They are no where said to be raised to incorruption, or immortality, but to be destroyed, to be cast into the lake of fire, to be burnt up, root and branch; to be consumed, devoured, burnt up as chaff, thorns, &c. I need not mention particular texts, because the general part of the threatenings in the Scriptures run in that stile. And I have sometimes of late reasoned with myself, that the second death must end either in the restoration or annihilation of those who were cast therein; for there seemed something in *endless misery*, that surpassed my belief at times. But I could not satisfy myself whether the wicked would be finally restored to some degree of happiness, or totally destroyed; and was apt to think the latter, as it seemed a strange figure of speech to call *destruction* Restoration. Pray, have you ever thought upon this matter?

Minister. There are but three possible things that can befal those who are cast into the second death; either *endless misery*, *total annihilation*, or *restoration**; a fourth

* There can be but these *three* states of men after judgment; it is impossible to think of a *fourth*. The Scripture proof of any *one* of them necessarily destroys the other *two*. Thus, if Mr. W. has proved, that there shall be a restoration of all things, then there can be no truth in the doctrines of endless misery and annihilation. Endless misery, indeed, is losing ground very fast, among all close thinking men. There is something so tremendous in the idea, so disproportionate, so contrary to the divine perfections, so utterly subversive of the moral government of God, that to me it seems impossible for any man, who has thought deeply on the subject, to believe this sentiment, and at the same time love and trust the Deity; because *that* God who will inflict endless misery upon sinners, either made them for that express purpose--in which case he cannot be loved--or he made them for a better purpose, but is disappointed---in which case he cannot be trusted---through a deficiency of power or wisdom.

As for annihilation, or, as some chuse to call it, *destruction*, this is gaining ground among many serious men. Such as espouse this doctrine,

fourth cannot be thought upon; and but one of these can be true. Now, where there are only three possibilities,

doctrine, mean by destruction 'a *total and endless cessation* of conscious existence.' This, they contend, is the full sentence of the law—the proper import of the threatening of death, which will be executed upon all impenitent sinners. And they distinguish this from annihilation; alledging that, philosophically speaking, there can be no annihilation, and that *destruction* is the exprels phrase used in the Scriptures.

That the wicked will be destroyed is often affirmed in the Scriptures; and their destruction is *once* said to be ολεθρον αιωνιον, *olethron aionion*, everlasting destruction: but before we admit that God is under the necessity of striking any of his rational creatures out of being, we ought to pause and inquire,

1. Is such an act consistent with the character which the Scripture gives us of him, as possessed of all possible wisdom, goodness, and power? There is no lie of the truth, *i. e.* the Scripture doth not contradict itself. 1 John, ii. 21.

2. Would not such an act contradict many parts of Scripture? All such, for instance, as speak of the restitution of all things, and all such as speak of the destruction of death—the gathering together of all things in Christ—the reconciliation of all things by the blood of the cross, &c. &c. Most men will think that if all things are to be reconciled to God, then none will be endlessly destroyed; and that death cannot be destroyed, but by the universal prevalence of life.

3. Are not those who will be destroyed in a worse state through the mediation of Christ than they would have been without it? To me it seems this question must be answered in the affirmative; for the friends of destruction grant, that 'death, *i. e.* extinction of being, without a resurrection, would have been the only punishment of sin, if Christ had not become the resurrection and the life to men; but, on the ground of mediation, men will be raised from the dead, the wicked will—after awful periods of positive pain—be destroyed, or stricken out of being.' Consequently, the second death, with all its horrors, is the fruit of mediation; and, if no restoration take place, then, probably, more than half the human race will ultimately receive an injury, rather than a benefit, by Christ Jesus. Is this the glad tidings of great joy which the angel said should be to *all people*? Is this the blessing wherewith all the nations, people, kindreds, and tribes of the earth were to be blessed in the promised seed? And is the justification to life which came upon all men in Christ Jesus nothing more than a resurrection to endless death to millions!!!

4. Will the word destruction warrant such a conclusion? I think not. It must be granted, that destruction is often used in Scripture to signify a cessation of present existence *only*, without any contradiction

bilities, of which only one *can* be true, and one *muſt* be true, there are theſe two ways of diſcovering the truth:

diction of the promiſes that relate to a univerſal future reſurrection, as Gen. vi. 7, 13. vii. 23. Pſalm xc. 3. Heb. xi. 28. Jude, 5. &c. &c. Is it not, therefore, as reaſonable to ſay, that when deſtruction is threatened as the future portion of the wicked, it is to be underſtood without any contradiction of the reſtitution of all things, which God hath ſpoken by all his holy prophets ſince the *age* began? Doth not the analogy of faith require that, as we admit a reſurrection notwithſtanding the threatenings of preſent deſtruction, ſo we ought to admit an univerſal reſtoration, notwithſtanding future deſtruction, for the ſame reaſon—becauſe the Scriptures have revealed both.

If it be ſaid, that deſtruction ſhall be the *end* of the wicked, Phil. iii. 19. and that nothing can take place after the *end*, then let it be remembered, that the *end* of the old world was deſtruction, (Gen. vi. 13.) and yet there will be a reſurrection after this *end*. As for ολεθρον, *olethron*, the reader will find it occurs in the following places—1 Cor. v. 5. 1 Theſſ. v. 3. 2 Theſſ. i. 9. 1 Tim. vi. 9. in each of which it is rendered deſtruction; but evidently in 1 Cor. v. 5. it is ſuch a deſtruction as hath ſalvation for its iſſue. And 2 Theſſ. i. 9. ολεθρον αιωνιον, *olethron aionion*, can mean nothing more than *age-laſting* deſtruction. I reſt the proof of this upon what has been before ſaid concerning αιων, *aion*, and its derivatives.

This doctrine, however, certainly has ſome comparative merit; for, firſt, though it leaves a reflection upon the divine character, by ſuppoſing that ſome of the moral offspring of God are ſo corrupted, that he either cannot or will not reſtore them; yet it does aſcribe a meaſure of mercy to the Deity, by teaching, that he will not ſuffer them endleſſly to linger in miſery, but, by a ſort of cruel compaſſion, will ſtrike them out of being, as the laſt and only remedy remaining for their condition. Secondly, Though this ſcheme is deficient, by not aſcribing that full glory to the mediation of Jeſus Chriſt which the Scriptures allow it, yet it does teach the total deſtruction of ſin; though, alas! this is not to be accompliſhed but by the total deſtruction of, perhaps, the greater part of the intelligent creation of God!!! Thirdly. This view of the final iſſue of God's dealings with fallen creatures, removes ſome of that awful and horrible weight of anguiſh from the heart of a believer, with which the admiſſion of the endleſs miſery of any depreſſes it; yet it ſtill obſcures half the glories of Chriſt—draws an impenetrable veil over half the character of the bleſſed God—and leaves half the benevolent deſires of a renewed heart towards its fellow-creatures unfulfilled.

After all, I am glad to ſee this doctrine ſpread; becauſe it ſeems to me to be a conſiderable ſtep towards the belief of the full doctrine of divine

truth: firſt, if two of the propoſitions are proved to be abſurd, the third muſt ſtand: ſecondly, if one be proved true, the others muſt fall to the ground of conſequence. I have taken the ſecond method, and have ſhewed, that the doctrine of the Reſtoration is not abſurd, and therefore that it is true; conſequently, the others are falſe. But, beſides this way of arguing, there are three circumſtances which prove, to my ſatisfaction, that *annihilation* is not a truth.

1. That at the very time that the wicked are deſtroyed, they are ſaid to be tormented with fire and brimſtone; and that they have no reſt day nor night; and the continuance of this is for no ſhort time, (as probably would be the caſe, if the intention of God was only to deſtroy them out of being) but to the age of ages. Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

2. They are put to ſhame and periſh that they may know the Lord, as I have noticed before. See Pſalm xxxiv. 16, 17. lxxxiii. 16---18. and the obſervations I have made upon theſe paſſages in the dialogues.

3. But that on which I dare venture the whole cauſe is, that God hath abſolutely promiſed to reſtore and bring again thoſe whom he hath utterly deſtroyed.

Friend. Can you prove that? For if you can, it will ſettle the whole controverſy.

Miniſter. I truſt I can, in many inſtances; but I will fix upon one that is full to the purpoſe, and unex-

divine love. The minds of pious men are generally cautious, and fearful of going beyond the bounds of revealed truth. Habituated as they juſtly are to reverence the authority of Scripture, and having been uſed to think of the ſentiment of eternal miſery as true, they have a meaſure of timidity in diſavowing it, even if they have ſuſpected its fallacy, and are fearful of ſhocking the prejudices of mankind too violently; they therefore are often led to ſeek for ſome medium between the full blaze of truth, and the midnight darkneſs of error. Such a medium betwixt the unfounded notion of endleſs wrath and the luminous truth of the reſtoration of all things, I conceive the doctrine of deſtruction to be; and therefore I look with pleaſure on its progreſs; being perſuaded that moſt who embrace it, will, in time, come forward to the full belief of the univerſal doctrine.

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ceptionable; and that is, the case of Sodom and her daughters, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, who, 'giving themselves over to fornication, and going after 'strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering 'the vengeance of eternal fire.' Jude, 7.

As they are set forth for an example in their punishment, so also in their restoration: for we may certainly argue, that if any of the human race shall be annihilated, the inhabitants of Sodom, Gomorrah, &c. will be; as they were condemned with an overthrow, and made an example to those who should after live ungodly. 2 Pet. ii. 6. But these wicked nations shall have their captivity returned; shall return to their former estate, and shall be received by Jerusalem, as daughters, in the everlasting covenant; Jerusalem and her daughters, more wicked themselves, than Sodom and her daughters, shall be restored at the same time; shall remember their ways and be ashamed; shall never open their mouth any more to glory over the meanest of mankind---when the great JEHOVAH shall be pacified towards Jerusalem, for all that she has done, and towards Sodom and Samaria, for all that they have done also, inasmuch as they shall return from their long captivity, and be given to Jerusalem for daughters. See Ezek. xvi. 53, 55, 61, 63.

Now, by Sodom and her daughters being returned from their long and dreadful captivity, we must understand one of three things; either, first, the return of their descendants; or, secondly, the restoration of the land whereon the cities stood; or, lastly, the restoration of those very persons who were destroyed.

It cannot be the first, for there are none of their descendants remaining on earth; all were destroyed by fire and brimstone; none of the inhabitants escaped, Lot and his daughters excepted, who were only sojourners, and were descendants of Terah, and relations to Abraham.

As it cannot be the first, let us try the second. A very ingenious gentleman supposes, that in the time of the millenium, the Dead Sea shall be turned into land, and

and ſhall again become a beautiful, well-watered plain, and be given to the poſterity of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob: for he argues, and ſeemingly very juſtly, that as God promiſed Abraham all the land which he could ſee from the place where he then ſtood; (ſee Gen. xiii. 14---17.) and as the plain of Sodom was in ſight, it was included in the grant; and, though the Dead Sea now occupies the place where thoſe cities ſtood, yet God's promiſe cannot fail; and therefore, in the millenium, the Dead Sea ſhall be ſwallowed up, and the place ſhall become a fruitful plain. But whoever will read Ezek. xlvii. 8---11. may plainly ſee, that the waters that ſhall iſſue out from under the threſhold of the holy houſe, ſhall be brought into the Dead Sea, and ſhall ſo heal thoſe deadly waters, that they ſhall become fruitful, and bring forth fiſh in great abundance, exceeding many, like the great ſea, which is now called the Mediterranean; which fiſh ſhall be more uſeful for food to the innumerable inhabitants that ſhall then be in that happy country, than all the vegetables that would grow there, even though the whole place was turned into a fruitful garden.

Friend. But are you certain, that by *the ſea* is meant *the Dead Sea*, or Lake of Sodom?

Minister. Yes: 1. Becauſe all the other waters in thoſe parts, produce great plenty of excellent fiſh; and therefore need not healing. 2. Becauſe fiſhers ſhall ſtand upon the banks of the ſea, from En-geddi even unto En-eglaim, places that are well known to be contiguous to the Dead Sea; one of which is nearly at the north-eaſt corner, the other at the weſt end of the ſame. 3. The marſhes, and the miry places thereof, ſhall not be healed; but ſhall be given to ſalt, as ſpecimens of what the whole is at this time; which barren and deadly ſpots ſhall remain, as ſtanding evidences of the truth of Scripture, and the exact fulfilment of prophecy.

Thus, as Sodom cannot be reſtored in her poſterity, there being none remaining on earth---neither ſhall the Dead Sea be turned into land, in the millenium---it

follows, as the only remaining ſenſe of the return of Sodom's captivity, that thoſe very inhabitants who were deſtroyed by fire and brimſtone from heaven, ſhall be reſtored to a ſtate of felicity. And thus both the doctrine of *annihilation* and *endleſs damnation* fall to the ground at once.

Friend. But as it is the ſecond death, after the day of judgment, that is to deſtroy the bodies and ſouls of the wicked in hell, perhaps the inhabitants of Sodom, Samaria, and Jeruſalem, may be reſtored before that period, and may not be caſt into the lake of fire.

Minister. It is evident by our Saviour's words, (for we muſt not contradict any part of the Scripture) that this will not be the caſe; for he ſaith, That it ſhall be more tolerable for the land (that is, the inhabitants) of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for the cities where his goſpel was preached, and his miracles wrought, and yet the inhabitants remained impenitent: ſee St. Matth. xi. 24. x. 15. St. Mark, vi. 11. St. Luke, x. 12. From all which paſſages it is evident, that the inhabitants of Sodom will be condemned in the day of judgment, and puniſhed in the lake of fire---and though their miſery will not be ſo great as that of the inhabitants of the cities where our Saviour preached, and performed his mighty works---yet they will be miſerable in that day; and, conſequently, the return of their captivity is not to be expected, till after the creation of the new earth. Therefore, it is plain, that the lake of fire is not deſigned to annihilate thoſe who are caſt therein; ſince all that are not found written in the book of life, at the day of judgment, will be caſt into the lake of fire. They whoſe names are in the book of life will be happy. The inhabitants of Sodom will be miſerable, in ſome degree; therefore will not be found written in the book of life, conſequently will be caſt into the lake of fire. They will be reſtored---their captivity ſhall be returned; therefore the lake of fire ſhall not annihilate them. They are ſet forth for an example in their puniſhment, and, conſequently, in their reſtoration. I need not purſue this

this argument farther: it appears evident to me; and, till it be fairly anſwered, I ſhall add nothing more.

Friend. I lately read a ſermon, written by one Mr. B----, in which the writer brings many ſtrong reaſons for the eternity of hell torments, moſt of which have already been mentioned and anſwered in theſe dialogues; but he makes uſe of one which has not yet been brought under our conſideration, which is, That the damned are under the neceſſity of conſtantly committing freſh ſin, and therefore, as they will always continue to ſin againſt God, ſo, of neceſſity, their puniſhment can never ceaſe. Have you ever thought of this?

Minister. Yes, I have frequently heard it mentioned; but as it appears totally void of all foundation in the Scripture, it hardly deſerves any notice. The objections that I feel myſelf concerned to treat with ſerioufneſs and reſpect, and candidly to anſwer, are thoſe which appear to be drawn from the book of divine revelation; but if I muſt attend to all thoſe which the ingenuity of men might raiſe againſt the doctrine of the Reſtoration, I ſhould not only have a very hard taſk, but ſhould never know when I had done: and beſides, the diſcourſe would dwindle into trifling and conjectures, very unſuitable to the nature and importance of ſuch an awful and ſerious ſubject. I muſt obſerve, that this objection is nothing but a raſh ungrounded aſſertion, or bold conjecture, without the leaſt foundation either in Scripture or reaſon; and if I was to aſſert juſt the contrary, I cannot ſee why my aſſertion would not be a ſufficient anſwer.---Nevertheleſs, leſt it ſhould be thought that any objection can be raiſed, that cannot be fairly anſwered, and that I, knowing the ſtrength of this, would willingly evade it, I will ſay a few words upon it. The Scriptures univerſally hold forth the idea, that men will be judged, condemned, and puniſhed, according to the deeds done in the body. God 'will render to every 'man according to his deeds.' Rom. ii. 6. 'For we 'muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt,

'that every one may receive the things done in his 'body, according to that he hath done, whether it be 'good or bad.' 2 Cor. v. 10.

'And that ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and 'prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his 'will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes; but he that 'knew not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, 'ſhall be beaten with few ſtripes.' St. Luke, xii. 47, 48. Theſe, and all the paſſages that ſpeak of future puniſhment, conſtantly hold it forth as a juſt retribution for the evil deeds done in this life; but never intimate any thing of what this objection holds forth, of puniſhment being continued *ad infinitum* for crimes committed hereafter. Beſides, it is plain that puniſhments or corrections are intended to ſtop men from ſinning, and, under the divine agency, to take away their ſins. 'By this, therefore, ſhall the iniquity of 'Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take 'away his ſin.' Iſaiah, xxvii. 9. This is univerſally allowed to be the deſign of troubles and ſorrows in the preſent life, and why not in the next ſtate alſo?---- The Scripture ſays nothing to forbid this idea, but much to encourage it; particularly that awful paſſage where the prophet ſays, 'And it was revealed in mine 'ears by JEHOVAH of Hoſts, Surely this iniquity ſhall 'not be purged from you, TILL YE DIE, ſaith the 'Lord God of hoſts.' Iſaiah, xxii. 14. If then iniquity ſhall be purged away after death, it is certain that men ſhall not always continue to ſin in a future ſtate, for they muſt ceaſe to commit iniquity, before it can be purged away. And though their puniſhments may at firſt cauſe them to rage, (as we ſee is frequently the caſe in this world) yet ſhall they continue until the moſt ſtubborn ſhall be entirely ſubdued and humbled.

FRIEND. There is another argument of this ſame kind, *viz.* that is not founded upon any particular text of Scripture, which is directly contrary to the one you have been anſwering, which I have formerly thought unanſwerable, in favour of the doctrine of endleſs puniſhment,

puniſhment, which is the *infinity* of ſin, being againſt an infinite object, containing infinite hatefulneſs, and juſtly therefore deſerving infinite puniſhment. Sin is a crime of infinite magnitude, becauſe God is a being of infinite majeſty and perfection. Every crime juſtly demerits puniſhment proportioned to its malignity; and, conſequently, every offence againſt God demerits infinite puniſhment. No mere creature can ever ſuffer an infinity of puniſhment in any limited duration. It follows, therefore, that a ſinner deſerves to be *eternally* puniſhed. Farther, every man is under infinite obligations to devote himſelf wholly to the ſervice of God, his infinitely glorious creator, preſerver, and benefactor. To violate an infinite obligation, is to commit a crime of infinite malignity---a crime of infinite malignity deſerves infinite puniſhment. Can it ever be proved, then, that everlaſting or *endleſs puniſhment* is not the proper deſert of a life of ſin? I have often ſaid, that this argument, trite and common as it is, never was nor ever would be fairly anſwered, nevertheleſs, I am willing to hear what you have to ſay upon it.

Minister. As this argument is often urged as of the greateſt weight, and as you have ſtated it in its greateſt poſſible force, I ſhall endeavour to anſwer it fairly and particularly.

If ſin is *infinite*, then we muſt aſcribe to it one of the perfections of the Deity, which ſtrikes me as abſurd, if not ſomething worſe: *ſin*, a *privation*, an *act of a worm*, *infinite?* Actions muſt, in my opinion, take their denomination from the actors, and not from the objects. Infinite actions, or actions of infinite magnitude, require infinite power to perform them. If ſin is of infinite magnitude, goodneſs is more ſo, as deriving a power from God to the performance of it. But if you grant that David ſpoke in the name of the Mediator in Pſalm xvi. you may be at once furniſhed with a proof, that even goodneſs, in the higheſt ſtate in which it ever was exhibited in the world, was not conſidered as of infinite magnitude by the great performer. 'Thou haſt ſaid unto JEHOVAH, Thou art my Lord:

'my goodneſs extendeth not to thee, but to the ſaints 'that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom 'is all my delight.'---Ver. 2, 3. If acts of goodneſs were of infinite magnitude they muſt extend to God; but the ſpeaker, in theſe words, be he who he may, David or Chriſt, was careful to let us know, that he did not conceive his acts of goodneſs infinite. And if acts of goodneſs are not infinite, it would be highly abſurd to call evil actions infinite, which proceed wholly from the creature.

I grant, indeed, that there is a paſſage of Scripture which mentions the word *infinite* as belonging to ſin and iniquity; but then it is mentioned in ſuch a connection as ſhews it to be uſed, as Joſephus frequently mentions it, for a very great multitude. And thus it is uſed by many good authors, who certainly do not mean to uſe it in the firſt and proper ſenſe of the word. The ſacred writer, in the paſſage alluded to, takes particular care to guard us againſt any ſuch idea, as though ſin was of infinite magnitude, or even virtuous and righteous actions, which approach far nearer to infinity, as having their ſource from the fountain of infinite goodneſs. For Eliphaz ſays, 'Can a man be 'profitable unto God, as he that is wiſe may be profit-'able unto himſelf? Is it any pleaſure to the Almigh-'ty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him that 'thou makeſt thy ways perfect? Will he reprove thee 'for fear of thee? Will he enter with thee into judg-'ment? Is not thy wickedneſs great, and thine ini-'quities infinite?' Job, xxii. 2---5. And language very ſimilar to the above is uſed by Elihu, 'If thou 'ſinneſt, what doeſt thou againſt him? Or if thy 'tranſgreſſions be multiplied, what doeſt thou unto 'him? If thou be righteous, what giveſt thou unto 'him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy 'wickedneſs may hurt a man as thou art, and thy 'righteouſneſs may profit the ſon of man.' Job, xxxv. 6---8.

Theſe expreſſions, if they teach any thing, I ſhould think, expreſsly declare, that no actions of men can by

by any means be of *infinite* magnitude, in the ſenſe in which we commonly underſtand that word; though their numbers and magnitudes may be ſo great as to be ſtiled *infinite*, as the word is ſometimes uſed.

You aſſert, in conſequence of your ideas of *infinite* ſin, that *every* offence againſt God demerits infinite puniſhment. If the caſe be ſo, does it not tend entirely to take away the diſtinction which God hath made between ſins of infirmity and ſins of malice---ſins of ignorance and ſins of wilfulneſs---leſſer and greater ſins? All ſins are offences againſt God, and if *every* offence againſt God is of *infinite magnitude*, how can any be greater? And thus the diſtinctions are entirely deſtroyed, and all ſins will be eſteemed equal, contrary to the whole tenor of the Scriptures.

If every offence againſt God demerits infinite puniſhment, then it will follow, that God cannot render to any according to their ways, nor puniſh them as their iniquities deſerve, unleſs they are doomed to *endleſs miſery*, what then will become of all thoſe threatenings where God threatens to puniſh people for all their iniquities, and yet to ſhew favour to them afterwards? This is impoſſible upon your plan, for none can ever receive all the puniſhment due to their ſins during numberleſs ages. Yet, if the word of God be true, he can deal with tranſgreſſors as they have done, and yet be gracious to them afterwards. 'For thus ſaith Adonai JEHOVAH, I will even deal with thee as thou haſt done, which haſt deſpiſed the oath in breaking the covenant. Nevertheleſs, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will eſtabliſh unto thee an everlaſting covenant---that thou mayeſt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou haſt done, ſaith Adonai JEHOVAH.' Ezek. xvi. 59, 60, 63.

Here is an inſtance to the purpoſe, of thoſe whoſe ſins were of the deepeſt die, and to whom God threatens to deal as they had done, and to puniſh them for all their numerous and aggravated tranſgreſſions, and yet

yet to remember mercy for them afterwards, and to be pacified towards them for all that they had done. All which things would be abſolutely impoſſible, according to your ideas. In many other parts of Scripture God promiſes to render to tranſgreſſors according to their works and ways, and yet to be afterwards gracious unto them. And in one place, at leaſt, where God is declaring the great mercies which he will manifeſt unto the children of Iſrael, in returning them to their own land, and cauſing them to dwell ſafely therein, he ſays, 'And firſt I will recompenſe their iniquity 'and their ſin *double:* becauſe they have defiled my 'land, they have filled mine inheritance with the car-'caſes of their deteſtable and abominable things.'---- Jer. xvi. 18. What do you think of this? If every offence is of infinite magnitude, and deſerves infinite puniſhment, which can never be fully executed, then how can God puniſh a people for *all* their iniquities, and *do* to the greateſt ſinners *as* they have *done*, yea, and recompence their iniquity, and their ſin *double* firſt, and then be gracious to them, and love them, and be pacified towards them afterwards? And the prophet Iſaiah ſays, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, 'ſaith your God: ſpeak ye comfortably to Jeruſalem, 'and cry unto her, that her warfare is accompliſhed, 'that her iniquity is pardoned; for ſhe hath received 'of the LORD'S hand DOUBLE FOR ALL HER SINS.' Iſaiah, xl. 1, 2. Here a fact is ſaid to be accompliſhed, which upon your ſcheme can never be done to all *eternity*; for if every offence againſt God is of infinite magnitude, and deſerves infinite puniſhment, none can ever have received *ſingle* for *one* of their *ſins*, far leſs DOUBLE for ALL.

And therefore nothing can poſſibly be more evidently contrary to Scripture, than your trite and common argument, that, as every ſin is of infinite magnitude, ſo it juſtly demerits infinite puniſhment, which as no mere creature can bear, muſt neceſſarily ſubject all who are recompenſed according to their own doings to *endleſs* miſery.

Beſides,

Beſides, if I was to grant you, contrary to Scripture, reaſon, and common ſenſe, that every offence is of infinite magnitude, and naturally deſerves infinite puniſhment, how would prove from *that* the certainty of *endleſs miſery?* Do you make nothing of the reconciliation which our Lord Jeſus has made for *all ſinners*, and for *all ſins?*

Let me aſk you ſeriouſly, Did not Chriſt make a full and complete offering and propitiation for the ſins of the whole world? Is it not certain that his merits were far greater than the demerits of all mankind? Is he not the Lamb of God who taketh away the ſin of the world? If Chriſt died for all men, without exception, as you grant, and removed all their iniquities, and bore them away, and reconciled all to God by his death, while they were enemies, much more, as he has paid ſo great a price for their ranſom, he will recover them out of their loſt eſtate, and ſave them by his life. 'Where ſin abounded, grace did (or ſhall) much more 'abound. That as ſin hath reigned unto death, even 'ſo might grace reign through righteouſneſs unto eter-'nal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.' Rom. v. 20, 21.

I conclude, that, let ſin be ever ſo great, the grace of God is greater: and if you will have it that ſin is of infinite magnitude, I hope you will not deny the propitiation of Jeſus Chriſt, which he made for all ſins, the ſame character. Therefore, if you magnify ſin, and inſiſt upon the greatneſs of its demerit, I will endeavour to magnify the all-powerful Redeemer above it, and ſpeak of his power to redeem all the human race, for whom he ſhed his blood; and then you will gain nothing in favour of the doctrine of endleſs damnation, by all your arguments founded upon the *infinity* of ſin: Chriſt being far more infinite to ſave, than ſin can be to deſtroy: and as he has undertaken to redeem and bring back thoſe who were loſt, there is no danger of his failing to perform it.

Friend. I muſt confeſs that what you have ſaid on this head entirely convinces me, that we cannot found the *eternity* of puniſhment upon the *infinity* of ſin; and you

you have given me more satisfaction upon many points in these conversations than I ever expected to receive. I am indeed at length almost persuaded to receive your sentiments---though I once thought that it was impossible to answer all my objections, yet you have gone far towards it. Nay, I cannot at present recollect any thing material, but what you have answered. I would not, however, be too hasty in adopting this system, but, after your own example, consider it well. But there is certainly something more grand, beautiful, and harmonious in this view than can be found in any other scheme; for both the other systems end in darkness and black night, one in *endless damnation*, and the other in *gloomy annihilation*. But on your plan, light rises out of obscurity, and a glorious day succeeds the darkest scenes. This view of things sets the book of divine revelation in the most pleasing light, and appears, for aught any thing that I can see, consistent with the divine perfections. But why, since you believe the Universal Restoration, do you not mention it more freely and fully, in your public discourses?

Minister. On the other hand, some ask me, Why do you ever mention it at all in your sermons, since it is not essential to salvation to believe it? To them I give these answers.

1. St. Paul declared to Timothy, that this universal gospel of God's being the Saviour or Restorer of all men, but especially of those that believe, was a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation; and that they laboured and suffered reproach, because they trusted in God, as the universal saviour. But he was so far from being ashamed of this belief, that he said to Timothy, 'These things command and teach.'---1 Tim. iv. 9---11. And so am I determined to do, at proper opportunities; notwithstanding the reproach and contempt awaiting me for so doing.

2. Though it is frequently said to be a matter of little or no consequence, if true, yet if it be any part of the record God hath given of his son, (as I think I have proved) we are in danger of making him

him a liar, if we believe it not. See 1 John, v. 9, 10, 11.

3. Though you may be Chriſtians* and not believe it, yet I cannot; though once I could alſo. But now the evidences of its truth appear ſo plain to my mind, that it would be criminal in me not to believe it: and ſince I do believe it, would it not be highly diſhoneſt in me to deny it? I have never done ſo yet, when aſked; and God forbid, that I ſhould be aſhamed to publiſh what he has commanded to be made known.

4. I have commonly acted merely on the defenſive; and I never ſhould, that I know of, have preached it in public, or but rarely, far leſs have written upon the ſubject, had it not been repreſented as a dangerous and deſtructive hereſy, and people been cautioned againſt hearing me on that account.

5. I have been frequently deſired to preach upon the ſubject expreſsly; and could not well refuſe, without betraying a cowardly diſpoſition.

6. I aſk, Who is the beſt man---he who preaches the truth contrary to his judgment, for intereſt, or to gain applauſe,---or he that fairly ſpeaks as he thinks, without diſguiſe, although he knows that it will diſpleaſe his beſt friends on earth, even upon the ſuppoſition that he errs, in many points? If there be an heretic in the world, it is the man, who, for the love of money or applauſe, or through the fear of man, preaches that to others which he himſelf doth not believe. 'He that is ſuch, is ſubverted, and ſinneth, 'being condemned of himſelf.' Tit. iii. 11.

7. If we are to hold forth nothing to mankind but what all are agreed in, we muſt diſcourſe upon very few ſubjects; for I do not recollect ſo much as one, but what people either diſagree about the thing itſelf, or the manner of explaining and holding it: no, not even the being and perfections of God! nor any point of doctrinal, experimental, or even practical religion.

8. We are to endeavour to teach mankind what they know not, as well as to confirm them in what they

they are already taught; should keep back nothing that may be profitable to them; should give meat to strong men, as well as milk to babes; and should not shun to declare the *whole* counsel of God. We ought to justify the ways of God to men, to shew the necessity and harmony of divine revelation, and take pains to convert infidels; all which things are more promoted by this view than any other.

As to your question, why I do not dwell more upon it, I answer---

1. There are a thousand other subjects in the Bible, besides this, and all deserve consideration, according to their weight and importance.

2. I have an utter aversion to going always in the same round of matter or manner; and therefore I frequently vary in both.

3. There are many other subjects of more present importance than the belief of this; such as repentance, faith, hope, love, obedience, &c. and therefore ought to be more frequently insisted on, in proportion to their present use.

4. There are many scenes of providence and grace to take place in the universe, before the general Restoration; such as the millenium, the calling of the Jews, the universal spread of the gospel through the earth, &c. These things are much nearer, and therefore the Scripture speaks more of them; and what God most speaks of, in his word, we should discourse of most to the people.

5. This doctrine, though it may have its use in converting men, and certainly enables those who believe it, to set forth the terrors of the Lord, and his mercies, in a more striking manner than otherwise they could, yet it is chiefly useful in comforting the people of God, and, in part, relieving them from that bitter anguish which their tender minds feel, from the consideration of the vast numbers that perish; and, therefore, may not be so proper for a popular audience as many other subjects.

6. The

6. The plan of this grand Reſtoration is ſo vaſt, includes ſo many different and ſeemingly contradictory diſpenſations, that it cannot be fairly ſtated, and fully defended, in one ſermon, and eſpecially the objections anſwered; and many perſons are not capable of taking in and digeſting at once ſo many ſubjects as are neceſſary to the underſtanding of this matter, and have not patience to attend to a long ſeries of demonſtrations, arguments, and proofs; and therefore this doctrine ſhould not be introduced by any man, in any place, unleſs he has opportunity to give it a fair inveſtigation; and therefore I never mention it at all, at my firſt preaching in any place, nor unleſs I have ſufficient opportunities to diſcuſs it.

7. Chriſt ſays to his diſciples---'I have yet many 'things to ſay unto you; but ye cannot bear them 'now.' St. John, xvi. 12. And St. Paul ſays, 'And 'I, brethren, could not ſpeak unto you as ſpiritual, but 'as unto carnal; even as unto babes in Chriſt: I have 'fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto 'ye were not able to bear it; neither yet now are ye 'able.' 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. 'Strong meat belongeth to 'them that are of full age; even thoſe, who, by rea'ſon of uſe, have their ſenſes exerciſed, to diſcern both 'good and evil.' Heb. v. 14. Therefore, as the Saviour and his apoſtles adapted their ſubjects and diſcourſes to the circumſtances of their hearers, and treated them in a gentle manner, ſo ſhould we. Prudence, patience, and care ſhould always be uſed in diſcourſing on a doctrine ſo deep and awful as this; and, eſpecially, as it hath been ſo little known of late ages.

8. I would wiſh to eſtabliſh well the firſt principles of Chriſtianity, before I meddle with any thing elſe; and as to the doctrine of the Reſtoration, I would rather that it ſhould ſeem to be naturally inferred from truths already known, than delivered as an independent ſyſtem: I therefore ſeldom or ever make it a leading point in my diſcourſes; but ſometimes lead to it, as a natural conſequence of what has been ſaid. After all, I would chuſe that men ſhould diſcover it themſelves,

ſelves, by carefully reading the Scriptures, without prejudice, believing them to be ſtrictly true---by living in love towards God and man---by walking in humility, often reflecting on their former eſtate---and conſtantly viewing the ſufficiency of Chriſt, and the boundleſs love of their great Creator, rather than to learn it of any man, far leſs ſtill, of ſuch an unworthy worm as I am.

9. As far as I know my own heart, truth in love is my conſtant aim. I am unconnected with any party; and am not ſo prejudiced in favour of any thing that I hold, but that I would willingly be convinced in any thing, by proper evidence; and when ſo convinced, I am ready to retract publicly. As, therefore, I do not feel myſelf perſonally intereſted to ſupport the ſyſtem, right or wrong, I have dwelt much leſs upon it than moſt preachers do upon their particular ſentiments.

10. When I firſt embraced theſe views I was obliged to give ſome account of my reaſons; and I choſe rather to do it by writing than preaching. Accordingly I publiſhed my ſentiments, and anſwers to many objections; which publications being in the hands of thoſe to whom I preached, made it leſs neceſſary for me to diſcourſe upon thoſe matters in public, or even in private, as I could refer to what I had written; and with the ſame view I am inclined to publiſh theſe familiar diſcourſes, which we have had together; after which it will be leſs neceſſary than ever for me to preach the Reſtoration publicly; yet I will not wholly avoid it, at convenient times, and in proper circumſtances.

11. Laſtly, as I know ſo much of the nature of man, as to be ſenſible that he turns, with diſguſt and loathing, from what is perpetually crammed down his throat; but reliſhes that which he falls upon, as it were accidentally, and comes into by little and little, I have always made it a rule never to introduce it, in public or private, unleſs where it was earneſtly deſired, nor ever to continue it long together; and, above all, never to queſtion people upon the ſubject, after diſcourſing upon it; aſking them, ſaying, Do you believe it?

it? &c. Nor would I ever wish to press them with the arguments at once, and oblige them immediately to yield; as this kind of conduct, so far from answering any good purposes, commonly sets them against what is thus intruded upon them. It is the best way to give time and leisure to persons, whom you would wish to convince; and let them exercise their own faculties.

Friend. I must confess that what you have advanced is highly satisfactory to me, and I trust will be so to many others, who may read these conversations, which I hope to have the pleasure of seeing in print before long; and in the mean time, I wish for a blessing to attend your labours, and that you may be an instrument of much good to mankind in your day and generation, and that you may obtain a crown of life from the Lord the righteous judge, in the day of his appearing.

Minister. I thank you most kindly for your benevolent wishes---I heartily wish the same blessing may come to yourself. And if I have been an instrument of giving you any satisfaction, let all the glory be to God---but let me have an interest in your prayers.

FINIS.

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